or Mynăr, spoken in the extreme north, and there may be others. A great desideratum for linguistic purposes is a more adequate method of recording sounds, and especially differences of tone, than that adopted for the standard speech, which though sufficient for practical purposes, does not accurately represent either the quantity or the quality of the vowels, and leaves something to be desired as regards the consonants (especially those only faintly sounded or suppressed). These things, no doubt, will come in time. The immense advance which has been made in education by the Khasis during the last half-century has enabled some among them to appreciate the interesting field for exploration and study which their own country and people afford; and there is reason to hope that with European guidance the work of record will progress by the agency of indigenous students.

It remains to summarize briefly the principal distinctive features of this vigorous and sturdy race, who have preserved their independence and their ancestral institutions through many centuries in the face of the attractions offered by the alien forms of culture around them.

In the first place, their social organization presents one of the most perfect examples still surviving of matriarchal institutions, carried out with a logic and thoroughness which, to those accustomed to regard the status and authority of the father as the foundation of society, are exceedingly remarkable. Not only is the mother the head and source, and only bond of union, of the family: in the most primitive part of the hills, the Synteng country, she is the only owner of real property, and through her alone is inheritance transmitted. The father has no kinship with his children, who belong to their mother's clan; what he earns goes

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to his own matriarchal stock, and at his death his bones are deposited in the cromlech of his mother's kin. In Jowai he neither lives nor eats in his wife's house, but visits it only after dark (p. 76). In the veneration of ancestors, which is the foundation of the tribal piety, the primal ancestress (*Ka Iāwbei*) and her brother are the only persons regarded. The flat memorial stones set up to perpetuate the memory of the dead are called after the woman who represents the clan (*māw kyathei*, p. 130), and the standing stones ranged behind them are dedicated to the male kinsmen on the mother's side.

In harmony with this scheme of ancestor worship, the other spirits to whom propitiation is offered are mainly female, though here male personages also figure (pp. 108—109). The powers of sickness and death are all female, and these are those most frequently worshipped (p. 107). The two protectors of the household are goddesses (p. 112), though with them is also revered the first father of the clan, *U Thāwlang*.

Priestesses assist at all sacrifices, and the male officiants are only their deputies (p. 121); in one important state, Khyrim, the High Priestess and actual head of the State is a woman, who combines in her person sacerdotal and regal functions (p. 70).

The Khasi language, so far as known, is the only member of the Mān-Khmēr family which possesses a grammatical gender, distinguishing all nouns as masculine and feminine; and here also the feminine nouns immensely preponderate (p. 206). The pronouns of the second (*nēc*, *phā*) and third person (*ū*, *kā*) have separate forms for the sexes in the singular, but in the plural only one is used (*phī*, *kī*), and this is the plural form of the feminine singular.

It may perhaps be ascribed to the pre-eminence

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also eat field rats and one kind of monkey (*u shrik*). The Syntengs and Lyngams are fond of tadpoles, and the Khasis consider a curry made from a kind of green frog, called *ka japiek*, a *bonne bouche*. They, however, do not eat ordinary frogs (*jakoid*). The Khasis of Mariaw, Maharam, Nongstoin and some other Siemships eat the hairy caterpillar, *u hiang phlang*.

A staple food which must not be forgotten is the inner portion of the bark of the sago palm tree, *ka tiéi*, which grows wild in the forest and attains a large size. The tree is felled and the outer bark removed, the soft inner part is cut into slices, dried in the sun, pounded in a mortar and then passed through a fine bamboo sieve. A reddish flour is obtained, of sweet taste, which is boiled with rice. This flour is said to make good cakes and puddings.

Although the Khasis are such varied feeders, there are some clans amongst them which are prohibited by the ordinances of *eneng*, or taboo, from eating certain articles. The following are some instances:—

The Cherra Siem family cannot eat dried fish (*khá-pinli*); the Siem of Mylliem must not eat the gourd (*u pathoe*); a fish called *ka'khá-lasi* is taboo to some of the *Siem-lik* clans. Some of the War people must not eat *ka khyng* (preserved fish), and the clan *'khar-um-wiid* in Khyrim is debarred from the pleasure of partaking of pork. The flesh of the sow is *eneng* to the *'dkhar* clan, although that of the male pig may be eaten.

DRINK.

The Khasis are in the habit of regularly drinking considerable quantities either of a spirit distilled from rice or millet (*ka'iad pudkha*), or of rice-beer, which is of two kinds (1) *ka'iad khiar*, (2) *ka'iad um*. Both of these are made from rice and, in some places, from millet, and the root of a plant called *u khawiang*. *Ka'iad khiar* is made by boiling the rice or millet. It is then taken out and spread over a mat, and, when it cools, fragments of the yeast (= *khawiang*) are sprinkled over it. After this it is placed in a basket, which is put in a wooden bowl. The

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SECTION III.

LAWS AND CUSTOMS.

TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.

[88] [91] The inhabitants of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills may be said to be divided into the following sections:—Khasi, Synteng or Pnar, War, Bhoi, and Lyngam. These divisions represent collections of people inhabiting several tracts of country and speaking dialects which, although often deriving their origin from the Khasi roots, are frequently so dissimilar to the standard language as to be almost unrecognizable. The above sections may be sub-divided as follows:—The Khasis into the inhabitants of the central high plateau, Cherra and Nongstoin, Mylliem, Maria, Nongkhlaw, and the neighbouring Sumdeips. The Syntengs or Pnars may be divided as follows:—Into Syntengs proper, Nongtengs, and Khawengs; the Wars into War proper, and War Pnar; the Bhois into Jaitiengs, Myrsis, Synthiengs, and the Khasi-Bhois, i.e. Khasis who inhabit the low country to the north of the district, which is called generally the "Bhoi." The Lyngams are a separate division. They must not be confused with the Dhos or Bhoys who are Garos. It must, however, be remembered that the Jaitieng, Myrsi, and Synthieng sub-divisions of the Bhoi division are not Khasi, but War, i.e. they belong to the Bodo or Dura group. The Lyngams are half Khasis and half Garos, and the Dhos or [92] Bhoys are Garos who observe the Khasi custom of erecting [93a] memorial stones. The above tribes and sub-tribes are not [93b] strictly endogamous, nor are they strictly exogamous, but they are more endogamous than exogamous; for instance, Syntengs more often marry Syntengs than Khasis, and vice [illegible], and it would be usually considered derogatory for a

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Khasi of the Uplands to marry a Khasi or War woman, and a Jaintiya to marry a Lyngam. These divisions are subdivided into a number of septs, taking Mr. Risley's definition of "sept" as being the largest exogamous division of the tribe. It will, however, be more convenient to speak of these septs as "clans," the word "clan" having been used in other parts of this Monograph and by other writers.

Many of the clans trace their descent from ancestresses or kurs (grandmothers), who are styled ki Iawbei Tyrsei, lit. grandmothers of the root (i.e. the root of the tree of the clan). In some of the clans, the name of this ancestress survives; take as instances the Wyllong-ngap and Wyllong-phlah clans of the Khyrim State, the names of the ancestresses of the clans being Ia ngap (honey, i.e. the sweet one), and Ia phlah respectively. This tribal ancestress, as will be seen in the paragraph of the monograph dealing with ancestor-worship, is greatly reverenced, in fact, she may almost be said to be deified. The descendants of one ancestress of the clan, Ka Iawbei Tyrsei, are called shi kur or one clan. We then come to the division of the kpoh or sub-clan, all the descendants of one great grandmother (Ka Iawbei Tyrsei), being styled shi kpoh. The next division is the sing (lit. house) or family. It is almost invariably the case that the grandmother, her daughters and the daughter's children, live together under one roof, the grandmother during her life-time being the head of the house. The grandmother is styled Ka Iawbei Khynrew, or the young grandmother, to distinguish her from the other two grandmothers, Ka Iawbei Tyrsei and Ka Iawbei Synnon who have been mentioned above. The young grandmother, her daughters and their children are said to belong to shi sing one house, the word sing in this instance possessing amongst the Khasis the same significance as the English word family.

We will now see how the Khasi clan (kur or jaid) grew out of the Khasi family (sing). Let us take the example of the great Siangshai clan of Cherra. Disregarding the myth that the Siangshais are descended from a mermaid, it may be stated that there seems to be a fairly general belief amongst the Siangshais that their first ancestress or kur came from the

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country beyond the Kopili river came so far as to say that she came from the Assam Valley), to the Jaintia Hills, where she found a husband. Legend relates that it was one of the peculiarities of this woman that she was able to accommodate herself in an earthen jar or *lalu*, which fact gave rise to the name *Lalu* by which she and her children were called by the Syntengs. The family prospered during the time when a powerful chief of the Mulsiang clan held sway in the Jaintia Hills. On the death of this king a civil war arose, and the *Lalu* family, together with many others, beat a retreat across the river Kopili. Here they lived in prosperity for some generations until a plague arose and carried off the whole family except one female, called *Ka Iaw-lum*, who became the sole owner of the family wealth. Many desired to marry her for her possessions, and it was owing to their importunities that she fled to Jowai to the house of a *lyngdoh* or priest. The *lyngdoh*, under pretence from his wife, tried to sell Ka Iaw-lum as a slave, but as one would offer more than 20 *mariks* for her (*shi-kâli*), this decided the *lyngdoh* to keep her. Out of gratitude for this kindness, Ka Iaw-lum brought her wealth from beyond the Kopili to the *lyngdoh's* house, when the son of the lyngdoh was given her in marriage. They lived happily for some time, when some adventurers from beyond the Kopili came to Jowai with the intention of carrying off this rich bride. The lyngdoh, however, having received warning of their intent, arranged for the escape of Ka Iaw-lum, and they fled to Sohphokkyrem, a place near Nongkrem in the Khasi Hills, where she established a village. Here Ka Iaw-lum was called *Ka Iaw-shâli*, because she paid every man who was engaged by her in founding a market there 20 *mariks* (*shâli*) per day for their labours. Here also she is credited with having first introduced the art of smelting iron, and she is said to have made various iron implements which she exported to the plains. She is also said to have kept a large herd of pigs which she fed in a large trough hollowed out of a *dieng-kâi* tree; it is to this fact that the Dieng-kâi tree owes its name. After Ka Iaw-shâli and her children had lived for some years in prosperity at Sohphokkyrem, they were attacked by the Synteng Raja (the Jowai King), U Long

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Raja (probably the Raja of Jaintia), and the Amsumne Sarpho- 6/4
lon. They fled to a place called Lyndiangmuthli, near Lyngkye- 7/3
don. Finding this place unsuitable as a home, the family split up into four divisions. One division returned to Jowai, where it increased and multiplied and afterwards grew into the Lalu clan, another went to Nonglilow and became the Diengdoh Kylla clan; another went to Mawiong and formed what is now known as the Pariong clan; the fourth, after some vicissitudes of fortune, went to Sungjyrnah and Cherra, at which place it established the powerful Diengkhlieh clan, and became afterwards one of the chief mantri or minister clans of this state. I have quoted the history of the origin of the Diengdoh clan at some length, to show what I consider to be an example of the Khasi conception of how the clan was formed, i.e. from a common ancestress, all of the clans having traditions more or less of descent from some particular Kiaw or ancestress. This story moreover is remarkable as pointing to a Khasi migration from beyond the Kopili river to their present abode. The clans of the present 6/4
day are nothing more or less than overgrown families, they are 7&8
bound together by the religious tie of ancestor-worship in common, and of a common tribal appellation, except in case of clans which have, owing to their size, split up into several sub-divisions, like the Diengdoh clan; each sub-division possessing their own symbols. Ancestor-worship in common and tribal appellation in common serve to indicate that the original unit was the family and not the tribe, for there would be no reason for the members of a clan to worship the same household gods and to deposit the remains of the clan members in the same tomb unless there was some strong tie, such as that of consanguinity, binding them together. It has been already 6/4
mentioned that each of these clans is strictly exogamous; this 582.
again supports the family origin theory. A Khasi can commit no greater sin than to marry within the tribe. Some of the clans are prohibited moreover from intermarriage with other clans, because of such clans being of common descent. If the 6/4
tribes (see Appendix) are carefully examined, it will be seen that some of them bear the names of animals, such as the Shwah or monkey clan, the Thaw or crab clan, or of trees, such as the Diengdoh clan already referred to. The

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members of these clans do not apparently regard the animals or natural objects, from which they derive their names, as totems, inasmuch as they do not abstain from killing, eating or utilizing them. The names of these objects are connected generally with some story, concerning the history of the clan, but there is no evidence to show that the clans-folk ever regarded the above animals or objects as their tribal totems. If the lists of the Khynriu and Chowra clans are examined, it will be seen what a large number bear the name of *Dkhar* or its abbreviation *Khar*. The word *dkhar* is that applied by a Khasi to an inhabitant of the plains. We come across names such as *Khar-mukhi, Khar-sawdi*, the first word being an abbreviation of *dkhar*, and *mukhi* being the common Bengali name which occurs in Chandra Mukhi, Surjya Mukhi, &c. *Sawdi* (*shawdi*) is the common Assamese word for a girl. The ancestresses of these tribes were plain women, carried off, no doubt, in the raids made by the Khasis over the border into Assam and Sylhet. The word *Jirang* in the list of tribes is a Synteng synonym of *kur* or *jaid* and the War word *Jhang*, which will often be found in the names of the tribes of the twenty-five villages of the Khynriu State, is merely a corruption of *jirang* or *jing*, the Synteng word for clan. Let us now see how the State or Khasi Republic was formed out of a collection of these clans, how these clans obtained political power, how some clans became more powerful than others, and how a Khasi King or Syiem is appointed.

STATE ORGANIZATION.

647 We have studied in the preceding chapter the formation of
642 the clan from the family, and how the former established villages. Let us now turn to the constitution of the Khasi State, which, it will be seen, has been formed, in some cases entirely by the voluntary association of villages, or groups of villages. The head of the Khasi State is the Syiem or chief. A Khasi state is a limited monarchy, the Syiem's powers
643 being much circumscribed. According to custom, he can per-
645 form no act of any importance without first consulting and obtaining the approval of his durbar, upon which the state

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exercise of. This durbar must not be confused with the electoral durbar which will be referred to later. It is an executive council over which the Siem presides, and also possesses judicial powers (for a description of a judicial durbar, see page 91 of the monograph). The form of summons to appear before this durbar used to be a knotted piece of string or cane, the number of knots denoting the degree of urgency of the summons, not a piece of pork, as one writer has said. Pork is a luxury which is not usually distributed gratis. The Siem manages the State business through his ministers, although it is true that in some States the members of the Siem family have been allowed a considerable share of the State management. This latter arrangement is, however, a departure from the ordinary rule in the Hynniewtrip, and is reported as unconstitutional. In some States there are village headmen, styled Sirdars, who settle cases, collect labour, and assess and receive for the chief the *ryoodi*, which may be literally translated as "gratification." In Nongstoin there is an official styled Lyngdoh, who is the superior of a number of village sirdars, and who acts as the Siem's deputy-governor. In the Khasi Hills there is no land revenue, nor are there any tithes or other imposts levied upon the cultivator's produce. The land, to a great extent, is the property of the different clans and villages, although in some instances there are estates owned by private persons. The chief is entitled to receive the income that arises from what are known as the *raj* or State lands only. All that the Siem usually receives from his people in the way of direct revenue is the State subscription, or *ryoodi*, mentioned above. Even this is supposed to be a voluntary contribution, and it is not demanded in some States. The tax is nominally a collection to meet the expenses of the State ceremonies, but is really a means of increasing the chief's private income. The contribution varies in amount according to the means of the villagers. The Siem's principal source of income, however, in all the Khasi States is the toll (*khonglí*), which he takes from those who sell at the markets in his territory. In the Khasis are great traders these tolls are often of the larger markets fairly valuable. The chief sources of excise revenue, the manufacture of both fermented and distilled

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liquor being subject to no local restrictions whatsoever. In a few States the Sirdar are commencing to levy registration fees, but the amounts are insignificant. Judicial fines are divided between the chief and the members of the durbar. In some States the Sirdar income amount to a few hundreds a year only. Generally speaking, the Khasi chiefs are necessarily a very impecunious set of persons, and many of them are indebted to, comparatively speaking, large amounts. The Siem is appointed from the Siem family, there being such a family in each of the fifteen Khasi States. The most important States are Khyrim, Mylliem, Cherra, Nongstoin, and Nongkhlaw. There are a few other petty States presided over by Lyngdohs, Sirdars, or Wahadadars. A fact which is of universal application is, that heredity is through the female side. The customary line of succession is uniform in all cases, except in Khyrim, save that in some instances cousins rank with brothers, or are preferred to grandnephews, instead of being postponed to them. The difference between the rule of succession and the rule of inheritance to real property should be noted. In the former case the case of the eldest matrilineal sister is order of priority of birth, although it is true that this rule has sometimes been disregarded. In cases of succession to realty, however, the inheritance goes to the youngest daughter of the deceased's mother, and after her to her youngest daughter. In connection to the Syngkhar, in the absence of male issue from the eldest sister the succession passes, by what has been aptly described as the "knight's move," to the male children of the next eldest sister. In Khyrim the custom of succession is peculiar, there being a High Priestess, and heredity being limited to her male relatives. Generally speaking, it would appear that succession was originally controlled by a small electoral body constituted of the heads (*Lyngdohs*) of certain priestly clans, who it is presumed, exercised their authority to select candidates when necessary, mainly on religious grounds. There has however been a distinct tendency towards the broadening of the elective basis. In the large State of Khyrim the action of the electoral body has been greatly restricted in the influence of the representative headmen of certain clans, but not entirely abrogated.

are six divisions, each of which is known as a *raj*. In each 631
raj there is a *durbar*, to which are submitted for approval
the elections of the heads of the *mantri* class. These elec- 631
tions are subject to the approval of the Siem. The Siem, sitting 631
with the *durbar* of the *raj* concerned, may dismiss a *lyngdoh*, 634
lyngdoh, or *mantri*, for bad conduct, or on account of physical
disability, in which case another *lyngdoh*, *lyngdoh*, or *mantri*
would be appointed, as stated above. The Mylliem State 631
originally formed a portion of the Nongkrem State, but owing 641
to a quarrel between one of the Siems and his nephew there
was a partition. In this State the electors are the heads of five
mantri clans, eleven *sutdohs*, or heads of clans, and certain
heads and other heads of clans. A majority of the electors is
sufficient for the election of a Siem. A Siem is succeeded by
the eldest of his uterine brothers; failing such brothers, by the
eldest of his sisters' sons; failing such nephews, by the eldest
of the sons of his sisters' daughters; failing such grand-
nephews, by the eldest of the sons of his mother's sisters; and,
failing such first cousins, by the eldest of his male cousins on
the female side, other than first cousins, those nearest in degree
of relationship having prior claim. If there were no heirs
male, as above, he would be succeeded by the eldest of his
uterine sisters; in the absence of such sisters, by the eldest of
his sister's daughters; failing such sisters, by the eldest of the
daughters of his sisters' daughters; failing such grand-sisters,
by the eldest of the daughters of his mother's sisters; and
failing such first cousins, by the eldest of his female cousins on
the female side, other than first cousins, those nearest in degree
of relationship having prior claim. A female Siem would be
succeeded by her eldest son, and so on. As in the Khyrim
State, the first, or any other subsequent heir, may be dis-
qualified by the electors for sufficient reason. An elector is
succeeded by the eldest of his brothers; failing brothers, by the
eldest of the sons of his sisters, and so on. An elector can be
dismissed by the Siem, but only for good cause and with the
consent of his *durbar*.

In the Nongstoin State there is a tradition that the first 641
Siem originally came from Simsang* Duygapar. The name 771

* Simsang is the Garo name for the river Someshwari.

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Siatlong Durgapur, of the place at the foot of the Garo Hills in the Mymensing district, may be a corruption of the former. The Siems are supposed to be descended from a stag, possibly a relic of totemism in this family. In this State there is a large electoral durbar consisting of 2 *mantris*, 31 *lyngdohs*, 25 *sirdars*, 1 *lyngdoh*, and 1 *lasoo*. The *lyngdohs* are the heads of the priestly class, by whom they are chosen. The sirdars of villages are appointed by the Siem in conjunction with the adult males of the different villages. There are two *lyngdohs* and two *lasoos* in the State, but one *lyngdoh* and one *lasoo* only at present are members of the durbar which nominates the Siem. A *lyngdoh* is the Siem's agent for the purpose of governing a collection of villages. He is appointed by the Siem with the consent of the adult males of the villages which he is to supervise. The Siem family of Nongkhlaw, or Khadsawphra, is believed to have been founded by a Synteng of the name of U Shaps, who left the Jowai hills with his sister, Ka Shaphlang, because she had failed to obtain her share of the family property in Jaintia. This man is said to have purchased certain lands in Sardwar in Kamrup. Apparently he did not obtain possession of this estate, for he came up into the Khasi Hills, and finding there certain villages without a ruler, he, at the wish of the *lyngdohs* of these villages, consolidated them into a state over which he ruled as a Siem. He was succeeded by his sister's son, U Syntiew, who further extended his territories until he obtained possession of other villages. U Syntiew is said to have delegated a portion of his powers to his two sisters, Ka Jem and Ka Sanglar, who ruled at Sohiong and Nongkhlaw respectively. Succeeding rulers further extended the Nongkhlaw territory. In 1829, U Tirot Singh rebelled against the East India Company and carried on for four years a successful guerilla warfare. He was finally captured and was imprisoned for life by the British Government. According to the statement of Raja Kiaw Singh, it would seem that formerly the heads of five *clans* had the right to appoint the Siem, to the heads of 3 *lyngdoh* clans and of the *Said* (Syiem) and Bhoiyah clans. In the Cherra State the electors are the male adults of the State, who are represented on the State durbar by the members of the 12 aristocratic clans, known

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698 severig in the Nonshig, three lyngdohs and two wantrio
assemble and decide who is to be Siem. They then summon
the elders of villages to meet them in darbar and obtain the
approval of the latter to their nomination. If the elders do
not approve, the combined darbar then decides who is to become
1733 Siem. In Nongpyong there is a tradition that two sisters, Ka
693 Jah ai Ka Jem, came to the village of Nongpyong, which was
then ruled by two lyngdohs, and that the latter, having ascer-
tained that the two sisters were of royal birth, married them.
They too travelled to other villages and obtained the consent
of the syndohs of these villages to the formation of all their
villages into a State of which Nongpyong became the capital,
and over which U Nga Siadong, the son of Ka Jem, was
appointed Siem by the five principal lyngdohs. After some
generations the lyngdoh of Mairang with his villages became
subject to the Siem of Nonglkhlew, an event which finds mention
in the annals of the Nonglkhlew State as the conquest of the
territory of the "Black" Siem of Nongpyong. Another
lyngdoh was appointed in place of the one whose territory had
been thus annexed.

698 In the Mawiong State the ancient custom was that six lesser
[695] appointed the Siem subject to the approval of the people of the
699 township. In the Nobosohpoh State there are two Siem
families, the "Black" and the "White," from either of which it
has apparently been the custom for the people to select a Siem,
as they wished. In Mawryngkan the electors of the Siem are
the heads of the four principal clans in the State. On a recent
occasion, the electors being equally divided regarding the
appointment of a Siem, it was necessary to appeal to the people
of the State. In Langrin there are, as in Mawryngkan and
Nobosohpoh, two main branches of the Siem family, i.e. the
[696] "Black" and the "White" Siems. Here there is no special
electoral body; all the adults of the state have the right to vote
at the election of a Siem. In Bhowal State Siems are appointed
by the heads of eight clans whose decision is apparently final,
provided that it is unanimous. In Mahgi-Sohmat a bare
majority of the heads of six clans would be sufficient for the
election of a Siem. Presumably both in Bhowal and Mahgi-
Sohmat, if the electors were equally divided, there would be
an appeal to the people.

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clans that she does not remarry; the idea being that so long as the house remains in the widow's keeping, the spirit of her husband is still with her. On this account many wives who mourn their husband's memories, and who do not contemplate remarriage, purposely keep the house for a long time. If a widow marries, even after the customary taboo period of one year, whilst her deceased husband's house are still in her keeping, she is generally looked down upon. Her children in such a case perform the ceremony of handing over the house of their father to his clan in a building specially erected for the purpose. The widow cannot enter therein, or even go near it, whilst the ceremony is proceeding, no matter whether the *jing sang*, or the price for removing the taboo after a husband's death, has been paid to the husband's clan or not. There is no evidence to show that polyandry ever existed amongst the Khasis. Unlike the Thibetans, the Khasi women seem to have contented themselves always with one husband, at any rate with one at a time. Certainly at the present day they are monandrists. Polygamy does not exist amongst the Khasis; such a practice would naturally not be in vogue amongst a people who observe the matriarchate. There are instances, however, of men having wives other than those they have regularly married, and in the War country children by such wives enjoy rights to their father's acquired property equally with the children by the legally married wife. As the clans are strictly exogamous, a Khasi cannot take a wife from his own clan; to do this would entail the most disastrous religious, as well as social consequences. For to marry within the clan is the greatest sin a Khasi can commit, and would cause excommunication by his kinsfolk and the refusal of funeral ceremonies at death, and his bones would not be allowed a resting place in the sepulchre of the clan. To give a list of all the Khasi exogamous clans would perhaps serve no useful purpose, but I have prepared from information kindly furnished me by the Sirdar of Khyrim and Cherrapunji, a list of the clans in those States which will be found in Appendices A and B. These will suffice as examples. It will be seen from the Cherra list that the different divisions of the Diengdoh clan, viz. Lain, Diengdoh-bah, Diengdoh-kylla, are prohibited from intermarriage; this is due to these branches of the clan being

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descended from a common ancestress. There are other instances of clans being connected with one another, such connection being called by the Khasis *iaid kur*. Whenever such connection exists, intermarriage is strictly prohibited, and is considered to be sin. There is no custom of hypergamy. A Khasi cannot marry his maternal uncle's daughter during the lifetime of the maternal uncle. This is probably due to the fact that the maternal uncle, or *bei*, in a Khasi household is regarded more in the light of a father than of an uncle. His children, however, would belong to the clan of his wife, and there would, therefore, in ordinary cases be no bar to the nephew marrying one of them. Marriage with the daughter of a father's sister is not allowed during the lifetime of the father, but after the latter's death there is no religious bar, although such unions are looked upon with disfavour by the Khasis. In the War country, however, such marriages are totally prohibited. A Khasi cannot marry two sisters, but he can marry his deceased wife's sister after the expiry of one year from the wife's death, on payment of *jing sang tyrsa* of *sang*, or taboo) to the wife's clan. A Khasi cannot marry the daughter of his father's brother, she is his own (his full birth sister). Similarly he cannot marry the daughter of his father's paternal uncle. He can, however, marry the daughter of his mother's brother, provided that the brother is dead. This somewhat paradoxical state of affairs is explained by the fact that the children of the mother's brother belong to a different clan to that of the mother, i.e. to the mother's brother's wife's clan. The Khasi, Synteng, War, and Lyngam divisions are not strictly endogamous groups, and there is nothing to prevent intermarriage between them. For instance, it has been the custom in the Nongkhlaw Siem family to obtain husbands for the princesses of the state from the War country. There is no custom amongst the Khasis of two one exchanging daughters, i.e. each marrying his son to the other's daughter. Notwithstanding the existence of the matriarchate, and the fact that all ancestral property is vested in the mother, it would be a mistake to suppose that the father is a nobody in the Khasi house. It is true that the *bei*, or mother's elder brother, is the head of the house, but the father is the executive head of the new house, where, after children

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the War country, it will be necessary to describe the land tenure and laws regarding land of each of these divisions separately. As land is always disputed by the Khasis and Lyngams from year to year, customs regarding land with these people are naturally very simple. Taking land in the high plateau of the Khasi Hills first:—The lands are classified under two main divisions, (a) public and (b) private lands. The following are the different descriptions of lands in the first division:—

Ka ri Raj, or *ka ri Siem*, which are Siem's, or Crown lands. These lands are intended for the support of the Siem family, and they cannot be alienated. The Siems are, however, precluded by custom from levying a land tax on persons who cultivate such lands, the relation of landlord and tenant between the latter and their chiefs being unknown.

Ka ri Lyngdoh.—These lands are for the support of the Lyngdohs or priests of the State. In some Siemships, as in Mawiong Siemship, paddy is grown on these lands from which rice is obtained for the State pujas.

Ri shong, or village lands.—These lands are set apart to provide a supply of firewood, thatching grass, &c., and are the property of the village. The inhabitants of other villages are not allowed to enjoy the produce of such lands. Such lands can be cultivated by eyots of the village, but the latter possess only occupancy rights, and cannot transfer them.

Ki law-lyngang.—These are sacred groves, situated generally near the summit of hills, composed of oak and rhododendron trees, which are held sacred (*lyngang*), it being an offence, or sang, for any one to cut timber in the grove, except for cremation purposes. These groves are the property of the villages.

(b.) Private Lands. These may be subdivided into *ri kur*, or lands which are the property of the clan, and *ri kpoh*, or family, or acquired landed property. In the Khasi Hills proper a very large proportion, certainly of the high lands, is the property of the clan; for instance, the high lands at Laitlyn, which are the property of the Khar bongor and Kur kaling clans, whose ancestors the large memorial stones close to the Laitlyn road commemorate, also the lands of the Thang Khew clan, and many others.

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Thang khiew clan, and many others. It has been explained, in a previous paragraph, how the clan grew out of the family. The clan lands originally, when population was sparse, were owned by families, but as the members of the family increased and a clan was formed, the lands became the property of the clan instead of the family. Such clan lands are properly demarcated by stone boundary marks. The manager of the clan lands is the *kni* (maternal uncle of the youngest daughter of the main family, or branch of the clan), whose house "*ka iing khaddoh*," or last house, is the place for performing all the religious ceremonies of the clan, and is also called *ka iing u*. All the members of the clan are, however, entitled to share in the produce of any of the clan lands they may cultivate. No clan lands can be alienated without the consent of a display of the whole clan.

Ki kpoh are private lands which have been either acquired by a man or woman individually, or, in the case of a woman, inherited from her mother; such lands must be entirely distinguished from the lands of the clan. In portions of the Jaintia Hills, if a man purchases a piece of land, at his death it passes to his mother, to the exclusion of his children; but in the Khasi Hills nowadays a man may have such lands, provided they were acquired after marriage, either formally by will, or informally, to his children for their support. In land customs as well as other customs the systems seem to preserve more closely than the Khasis what are probably the ancient ways of the two. It must be clearly understood, however, that all land acquired by inheritance must follow the Khasi law of entail, by which property descends from the mother to the youngest daughter, and again from the latter to her youngest daughter. Ancestral landed property must therefore be always owned by women. The male members of the family may cultivate such lands, but they must carry all the produce to the house of their mother, who will divide it amongst the members of the family. Daughters, other than youngest daughters, are entitled to maintenance from the produce of such family lands.

In the Jaintia Hills lands are classified as follows:—

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423 prominent trees on the boundary lines, or by natural boundaries such as streams.

92 67 In the Wár country to the West of Cherra, notably the country between the heights of Laitkynsew and the plains, considerable portions of the hill-sides are the property of communities known as *rongs*. A *rong* may be defined as a collection of families sprung from one common ancestress or ancestor. As an instance of these *rongs* I may describe the community known as the *lai rong* which owns land in the neighbourhood of Laitkynsew, the area owned being known as the "*ri lai rong*," or land of the three clans. These clans are descended from three men, U Kynta, U Xalwin, and U Tangrai, it being remarkable that in this case descent is traced originally from male ancestors and not from females. The three ancestors are said to have owned a large tract of land, and they had as their abode the village of Laitmawrin close to Laitkynsew; but owing to an epidemic, or some such cause, they deserted the village of Laitmawrin and went with their families to live in some of the surrounding Wár villages viz. in Tyrna, Nongkseh, Nongwar, Mostoh, and Mawlong. The descendants of the three men above-mentioned possess a genealogical table, showing their descent from the original three founders of the *rong*. They claim a large tract of country lying to the south and south-east of the Laitkynsew plateau, containing not only *rong* gardens, but also valuable lime quarries. There are other *rong* communities also in the neighbourhood, e.g. the *hiarieu phew rong*, or sixty *rongs*, who put forward claims to other parts of land. The boundaries of the *ri lai rong* are identifiable on the ground. The business of the *rong* community is managed by a doctar, an elder or other influential person being chosen as president.

423 [92] 68a In the country of the Lyngams the *rong* belongs to the person who cultivates it, but the land belongs to the *kur* or family. The Lyngam villages, like those in the Khasi Nongchar, do not pay any rent to the State. If outsiders cultivate within the areas set apart for the different Lyngam villages, all of them, including women, have to pay eight annas each to the people of the village in whose area they cultivate. There is usually a mutual understanding between inhabitants of Lyngam villages that certain tracts of land belong to the

be placed in the family tomb. There are special taboos for certain clans, of which the following are some examples. The clan Nongtaihlong cannot eat the lemon, the Khar-mawsiej clan must abstain from pork, the Chorra Sien family cannot eat dried fish, and the Sien family of Mylliem taboo the pumpkin. Possibly these taboos may be relics of totemism amongst these communities. The following are some of the other taboos, although some of them are but lightly regarded now-a-days.

(i.) To build a house with stone walls on all four sides.

(ii.) To use nails in building a house.

(iii.) To use more than one kind of timber in building the hearth.

(iv.) To build a house with resinous timber. Only the Sien family can use such timber.

(v.) To eat trees from a sacred forest.

(vi.) To take or give anything with the left hand.

(vii.) To step over any one's body.

(viii.) To kill any animal or bird without first throwing rice over its body.

(ix.) To drink the milk of a cow or goat.

(x.) To talk with any one, except with one of a man's or woman's fellow-workers, when the thrashing of paddy is going on.

There are the following special taboos for pregnant women.

(a) To accompany a funeral procession.

(b) To finish any sewing she may have commenced before the lowest seam is. There is a similar prohibition regarding the finishing of the plaiting of wicker baskets.

(c) It is easy for the husband of a pregnant woman to thatch the ridge of the house at such a time, or to fix a handle to an axe or a dao.

quilt, made out of the bark of a tree, which is beaten out and then carefully woven, several layers of fine bark being used before the right thickness is attained. This quilt is called by the Lyngngam "Ka-ajlar" (Khasi vinyad). Food is cooked in earthen pots, but no pie-crust is used, the bread is one of the marking-ink taking their place. The leaves are thrown away after use, a fresh supply being required for each meal.

The Lyngngam have one loom, they do not distil spirit; the loom is learned according to the Khasi method. Games they have none, and there are no social archery meetings like those of the Khasis. The Lyngngam methods of hunting are setting spring guns and digging pitfalls for game. The people say that now the Government and the State of Nongstoin have prohibited both of these methods of destroying game, they no longer employ them. But I came across a pitfall for deer not long ago in the neighbourhood of a village in the Lyngngam country. The people declared it to be a very old one; but this I very much doubt, and I fear that these objectionable methods of hunting are still used. The Lyngngam fish to a small extent with nets, but their idea of fishing *par excellence*, is poisoning the stream, an account of which has already been given in this monograph. The Lyngngam are omnivorous feeders, they may be said to eat everything except dogs, snakes, the hoolock monkey, and lizards. They like rice, when they can get it; for sometimes the out-turn of their fields does not last them more than a few months. They then have to fall back on Job's-tears and millet. They eat wheat largely, and for vegetables they cook wild plantains and the young shoots of bamboos and cane plants. The Lyngngam are divided up into exogamous clans in the same manner as the Khasis. The clans are matriarchal families. The Lyngngam have some stories regarding the founders of these clans, of which the following is a specimen:—"A woman was asleep under a soh-bar tree in the jungle, a flower from which fell on her, and she conceived and bore a female child who was the ancestress of the Nongsohbar clan." Some of the stories of the origins of other clans do not bear repeating. There do not appear to be any hypergamous groups. As with the Khasis, it is a deadly sin to

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may any one belonging to your own kur, or clan. Unlike the Khasis, however, a Lyngam can marry two sisters at a time. The Lyngam marriages are arranged by *Iaiongs*, or go-betweens, much in the same way as Khasi marriages; but the ritual observed is less elaborate, and shows a mixture of Khasi and Garo customs (see Section III.). The Lyngams intermarry with the Khasis. It appears that sometimes the parents of girls elect bride-money, and marriage by capture have been heard of. Both of these customs are more characteristic of the Bodo tribes of the plains than of the Khasis. There are no special birth customs, as with the Khasis, except that when the umbilical cord falls a feast is exercised, and the child is brought outside the house. Children are named without any special ceremony. The death customs of the Lyngams have been described in Section III. A peculiar characteristic is the keeping of the dead body in the house for days, sometimes even for several months, before it is buried. The putrefying corpse inside the house seems to cause these people no inconvenience, for whilst it remains there, they eat, carry on their ordinary occupations, and sleep there, regardless of what would be considered by others an intolerable nuisance. The religion of these people consists of a mixture of ancestor-worship and the propitiation of the spirits of hill and fell, which are, most of them, believed to be of evil influence, as is the case with other savage races. As with the people of Mongolia, the primeval ancestress, "*Ka Iaw ka*," is worshipped to the welfare of the clan, a new being sacrificed to her, with a *gourd-of-rice-beer* and leaves of the sal, or *dammar* tree. The leaves of the sal are afterwards hung up inside the house, together with the jaw-bone of the pig. Sacrifices are offered to a host demon, *U Basapang* (a god who brings illness), by the methods also to *Ka Blang Dylli U Blajong*, the god of cultivation, at seed time, on the path to the forest clearing where the seed is sown. Models of paddy storehouses, baskets and agricultural implements are made, and being used to indicate the grain. These are placed by the methods, the skulls of the sacrificial animals and the feathers of fowls being hung up on bamboos about the place where the sacrifice has been performed. There are no priests or *Iaiongs*, the fathers of the basket performing the various ceremonies.

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APPENDIX A.

EXOGAMIC CLANS IN THE CHERRA STATE.

1. [illegible]
   Intermarriage with Nape and Mynsnetia clans prohibited.
2. Phenglok
   Intermarriage with Lale, Diengdohkhah and Diengdohkylla clans prohibited
3. [illegible]
4. Dohling
5. Dohki
6. Duwai
7. Khar
8. Mynsnetia
9. Jaki
10. Jyrwa
11. Khar Jarain
12. " Khlem
13. " Khlong
14. " Kongor
15. " Kyrsi
16. " Lukki
17. " Nar
18. " Nongbiang
19. " Sia
20. " Ward
21. " Wati
22. " Wyllem
23. " Nare
24. " Shalang
25. " Syiemlieh
26. " —
27. Khongkei
28. " Kar
29. " Ji
30. " pah
31. " Sawang
32. " Syiemlieh
33. " Syiemlieh
34. " Syiemlieh
35. " Jaiu
36. " Nar
37. " Nongkai
38. " Syiemlieh
39. Khong nangar
40. " nankin
41. " ngapar
42. " riat
43. " synnai
44. " sohir
45. " shir
46. " sit
47. " sngi
48. " syn
49. " war
50. " wat
51. " wir
52. Lyngkhi-Nongkwi
53. Lyndon
54. Lyngdi
55. Mayor
56. Mawlieniang
   This is one of the mystic clans of Mawsynram State
57. Miringiang
   originally Siem Market in the Jowai Subdivision
58. Mirynta
59. Mawlong
60. Marbah
   Formerly one of the Khadar Kur clans. Has now become extinct.
61. Mawdkhar
62. Mukhlaw
63. Myrsiang
64. Myrthong
65. Nongkai
66. Nongkynrih
   One of the mystic clans of the Khyrim State
67. Nonglah
68. Nongtem
69. Nongkhlang
70. Nongrum
   One of the mystic clans of the Khyrim State

71. Nongtariang
These two clans cannot intermarry. Nongtariang is now one of the Khadar Kur clans in place of the Marboh clan which has become extinct.
72. Padoh
73. Paraniang
74. Pohnong
75. Prawai
76. Puria
77. Pongpyrthai
78. Rani
79. Rapthap.
80. Ryngab
One of the myntri clans of the Khyrim State.
81. Samai
82. Shalong
83. Shangpra
84. Shrieh
Shrieh means a monkey. Possibly totemistic
85. Siem Lyngng
86. Sohkhlet
87. Shyngpliang
88. Samer
89. Swer
90. Syiem
91. Syngai
92. Synrem
93. Thabah
94. Tham
Tham means a crab. Possibly totemistic
95. Tohtih
96. Umdor
97. Walang
98. Warkon
99. Khyrwang
100. Ksing

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APPENDIX B.

EXOGAMOUS CLANS IN THE KHYRIM STATE.

1. Awri
2. Barieng
3. Bare-ew-mwit
4. Blei
5. Bithai
6. Diengdoh (?)
   Intermarriage with Mawar clan prohibited
7. Dkhar
8. Dympep
9. Hadem
10. Jasin
11. Khang-shri
12. Khar laiso
13. " luki
14. " longar
    Intermarriage with Nongtwai clan prohibited
15. Khar lah-khiew
    Intermarriage prohibited with Khar-umsoid clan
16. Khar lamusid
17. " lasi
18. " luli
19. " lint
20. " dohling
21. " dumpep
22. " li-lint
23. " iap
24. " Kasuni
25. " Kongor
26. " Kset
27. " kynang
28. " long
29. " luni
30. " Malki
31. " Mawar
32. Khar mawlah
    Intermarriage with Kharpostiah clan prohibited
33. Khar mihpein
34. " mitthai
35. " mudai
36. " nonjai
37. " nonkhi
38. " nusti
39. " nyllem
40. " patti
41. " pein
42. " phan
43. " phar
44. " pohkong
45. " pohshiah
46. " postiah
    Intermarriage with Khar mawlah clan prohibited
47. Khar postih
48. " pran
49. " rymgi
50. " ryuta
51. " Sati
52. " shan
53. " shi-long
54. " shilat
55. " shong
56. " shriah
57. " sohsah
58. " sngi
59. " Umsoid
    Intermarriage with Kharlahkhiew clan prohibited
60. Khar urmot
61. " War
62. Kher

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68. Gtolob
64. Khongtimo
65. " tinh
66. " lieh
67. " Sohjdweng
68. " tikher
69. " dop
Intermarriage prohibited with Rongmei and Khongtoo class
70. Khong* inp
71. " ong
72. " ji
Intermarriage with Pongrup class prohibited
73. Khong pih
74. " kai
75. " khar
76. " khang
77. " kih
78. " kylla
79. " kyndiah
80. " lam
81. " lian
82. " lihong
83. " lisong
84. " lusi
85. " mulai
86. " nongkew
87. " nong
88. " nob
89. " pdai
90. " pnam
91. " pnan
92. " sdoh
93. " sdong
94. " shi
95. " sngi)
96. " sti)
Intermarriage prohibited also with Lyngdoh clan
97. Khong stia
98. " sylla (2)
99. " thaw
100. " tiang
101. " thowen
102. " wandoh (2)
103. " wet
104. " wir
105. Khriam
106. Khyriam
107. Khyriem
108. Khyriem mijat
109. Khyriem nawdoweh
Intermarriage with Pongrum, Lyngdoh and Mawthoh class prohibited
110. Khyriem waiddong
111. Kni Kaleng
112. Lamin
113. Lawei
Intermarriage with Lyngdoh clan prohibited
114. Lawsniehlaw
115. Lingdong
116. Liting
117. Lyngdoh
118. Lyngdoh
Intermarriage with Pongrup and Mawthoh class prohibited
119. Lyngiar
120. Mairong
121. Majaid
122. Mawar
123. Mawar
Intermarriage with Diengdoh clan prohibited
124. Mawiong
125. Mawphlang
126. Mawthoh
127. Mawthoh
Intermarriage with Pongrup and Lyngdoh class prohibited
128. Mawwa
129. Mawlah
130. Mawsein
131. Mukhia
132. Murah
133. Mullieu
134. Myllieu mynhong)
135. " Ngap)
136. " pdah)
Intermarriage between these class prohibited also with Sohliem clan
137. Myrsong
138. Nongrang
139. Niang-soh
140. Nonglait
Intermarriage with Nongkynrih class prohibited
141. Nonglait Partah
142. Nongkniew
143. Nong-khlieh

* The word khong has probably connection with the Syaiong word jong meaning a clan.

APPENDIX B

140. Kang Lyeuth
Intermarriage with Tsaghar clan prohibited
141. Kang Nee
Intermarriage with Kherdanger clan prohibited
142. Kang Nye
143. Kang Shee
144. Kang Shih
145. Kangcree
146. Kangpang
147. Kangtang
148. Kangtsun
149. Kangtsuh
150. Pilet
151. Pukkhis
152. Pukthui
153. Pungpeg
Intermarriage with Mowsh and Lyughi clan prohibited
154. Sankhang
155. Sawn
156. Syuchang
157. Syuchang (2)
158. Syughui
159. Syujah
Intermarriage with Mowsh clan prohibited
160. Syupu
161. Syutang
162. Syupngi
163. Shaiang
170. Shuding
171. Singking
172. Sukkhih
173. Sukkun
Intermarriage with Mylliemgaih clan prohibited
174. Sunji
175. Sunghiang
176. Sunsir
177. Surung
178. Suting
179. Swgi
180. Swar
181. Syuseh
182. Syutang
183. Syutang Ian
184. Tabing
185. Tangpu
186. Tangtang
187. Tarung
188. Tsaisuh
189. Tsupsin
190. Tsuti (2)
191. Tsupung
192. Tsutang
193. Tsutung
194. Wabang
195. Warbah
Intermarriage with Warshong prohibited
196. Warchem
197. " pu
198. " Shyllaw
199. War-mein
200. " nee
201. " Sungpi
202. War-khar
203. War-shong
Intermarriage with Warbah clan prohibited

custom prevails amongst the Syntengs. Inheritance to the goat of Siem (or chief) also passes through the female line, there being special customs of inheritance in each of the different chiefships.

3. The Khasis are divided into clans, or *kur*. These clans are strictly exogamous. Some of these clans derive their names from animals, insects, trees or fish,—*e.g.*, the *diem* clan, *diem* meaning a crab; the *shrish* clan, *shrish* meaning a monkey; the *rani* clan, so called from a fish by name *rani*; the *dienglieh* clan, *dienglieh* meaning a certain tree. There are other instances also. In such instances, the clan is said to have sprung from the animal, fish, or tree, as the case may be. There does appear to be a trace of totemism amongst the Khasis, although now-a-days their totems are not worshipped, nor do people abstain from killing, eating, or utilising them. A man when he marries does not seem to belong to the *kur* or family of his mother, but his children belong to the *kur* of the man's wife. Frequently the husband merely visits his wife at her mother's house. It is seldom the case that a man takes his wife to his own house, certainly not until several children have been born.

As might be expected, owing to the influence of the matriarchate, Khasi and Synteng women enjoy a much greater share of liberty than is usually the case with the sex. Although not wishing to make any general insinuations, there can be no doubt that Khasi women enjoy considerable freedom in their moral relations. Women do all the trading, and like their Manipuri sisters make all the home purchases.

4. *Ancestor worship*.—The Khasis propitiate *Ka Iawbei*, the first maternal ancestress of the clan, by sacrificing a pig; they also sacrifice yearly to *U Suidnia* (the departed maternal great-uncle). Also when a family is in trouble, *U Thaolang* (the departed great-grandfather) is propitiated. Ancestors are further worshipped by the erection of memorial stones. These memorial stones will be noticed separately.

5. *Birth customs*.—At the birth the navel of a child must not be severed by any instrument made of iron or steel, but by a sharp splinter of bamboo. The placenta is placed in a pot and is kept inside the house till the ceremony of naming the child takes place. As long as the placenta remains in the house, the latter is *nep*, or taboo, to anyone except the members of the family. On the *day* of the ceremony of naming the child, the father removes the placenta and buries it outside the house. Having done this, the feet of the father are washed with water before he re-enters the house. When the ceremony takes place, powdered rice is placed on a sieve (*a prah*) and a small hoe and three arrow- [illegible] the child is a male, and a *mait* (or *da*) and a star or (*mase sirap*) (worn on the forehead when carrying a load by the Khasis), if the child is a female.

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(ii) It is easy to use nails in fixing the timber of a house. 784

(iii) The ages, or bands, should be made of one kind of timber only.

(iv) To build a house with *unlucky* timber (*wah dilèni*). Only the Sara's family can use such timber.

(v) To cut trees from the sacred forest.

(vi) To take or give anything with the left hand.

(vii) To step over the body of any person.

(viii) To kill a fowl or a goat without throwing fire rice over the body of the victim.

(ix) To drink the milk of a cow or goat.

(x) To talk with any one, except with those who are working together, when the thrashing of paddy is going on.

(xi) Not to give fire or water when anyone demands the same.

(xii) A twin birth is easy. It is a more serious matter even than easy if the twins are of opposite sexes.

There are rules of very regarding marriages within prohibited 784
degrees of relationship, and there is a very stringent rule of any 785.
against marrying within the bar, or clan. Those who do this are excommunicated and their house or salon are not allowed to be placed in the family cemeteries. To marry within the same bar, or clan, is the greatest crime a Kissi can commit.

There are special rules of any affecting certain families, viz., for 784
the clan *Kongbilong* to eat a certain kind of leaves, for the clan 814
Kiawowoid to eat pork, for the Chowa Sara's family to eat dry fish, for the family of the Sara of Mylima to eat the pumpkin. Possibly, these taboos may be relics of totemism in these families.

14. *The Thlèn superstition.*—The following succinct account of this 773
interesting superstition appeared on page 294, paragraph 20, of the *Sierra Leone Guardian* of the 5th August 1905. I do not think I can do better than repeat it here: "The tradition is that there was once in a cave near Cherregonji a gigantic snake, or Thlèn, who committed great havoc among men and animals. At last one man, bolder than his fellows, took with him a load of grain and sat himself down by the cave and offered them one by one to the Thlèn. By degrees the monster became friendly, and learnt to open his mouth at a word from the man, to receive the lump of flesh which was then thrown in. When confidence was thoroughly established, the man heated a lump of iron red hot in a furnace, induced the snake at the usual signal, to open his mouth, and then threw in the red hot lump, and so killed him. He then cut up the body and sent pieces in every direction, with orders that the people were to eat them. Wherever the order was

Khar Dumpey. These three clans—Khar Dohling, Khar Dumpey and Khar Rohmih cannot intermarry on account of their common ancestry. U Khawa, the sister's husband of U Suite Bar is of Khar Dumpey clan and furnished me with the above details. He stated that his ancestors married a man of the old settler clans of Mawphlang and came to her husband's village. This man, being of the Khadar Kur, could build a house and cultivate land from the community holding. The property thus acquired passed to the daughters, and gradually the clan Khar Dumpey grew more numerous, and acquired rights to the Ri Raid like an old clan. [Genealogy I(vi)].

(d) The family of the first wife of U Jemgaing furnishes another illustration. The woman Ka Li came with her widowed mother from Cherra. The father had been a Syntieng from Jowai. The girl has been married by U Beshon, who is a member of one of the old settler clans. He has built a house for his family and made an excellent potato garden out of the common land for the maintenance of his wife and children. They will inherit it from him according to the usual Khasi custom. [Genealogy II(vi)].

(e) U Roberts who is a Syntieng of Jowai, and a Christian by religion (Genealogy V) came to Mawphlang in 1930-31 and after a couple of years married a non-Christian Khasi girl by Khasi rites thereby losing his membership of the church. He cultivated Ri Raid land when he stayed with his wife's mother Ka Nisan [Genealogy V]. This woman is of Khar Sohiong clan. One of her ancestresses, came to Mawphlang only a few generations ago, and married a man of the old clans. Her descendants have thereby obtained the privilege of cultivating Ri Raid. U Roberts has divorced his wife and no longer possesses this right. He now works as a tailor in the village, and lives with a friend near the bazaar.

(f) Gurdon has suggested that the large number of clans having Khar as the first part of the name of the Kur have originated from ancestresses who were carried off from the plains.

[p. 308]

SOCIAL GROUPINGS AMONG THE KHASIS OF ASSAM

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Introduction

THE Khasis, who inhabit the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district of Assam, are matrilineal. Like the Garos, they are matrilocal in residence. Exclusive ownership over family property is claimed by the Khasi women and the youngest daughter (*Ka Khadduh*) who lives permanently in the house of her mother, is the custodian of the family property and the holder of religion (*Ka kot ka niam*)[1].

This paper deals with the social groupings, namely, the clan, sub-clan and family, of the Khasis. The materials were collected in 1956 from Mawphlang, Cherrapunji and Mawkhiah and Mawsmai villages further south of the Cherra State.

Discussion

In the language of the Khasi, the prefix *Ka* is usually used before the name of a woman or any object belonging to a woman (or considered feminine). The use of *Ka* as a prefix before the name of each social group is suggested to have bearing on Khasi matriliny. *Kur* is not a very expressive and exact term for a clan. *Kadkur*, which is supposed to have sprung from the woman (*kong jaid na ka kyntkur*)[2] is more exact. Similarly, *Ka-Ki'juk* and *Ka-iing* denote the sub-clan and family respectively.

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[1] Gordon, P. R. T., *The Khasis*, London, 1914 p. 66.
[2] Op. cit., page 66.

Sept. 1958] Mukherjee : economic organ the Khasis XII

The primal father and the mother of the members of every clan are respectively known as *U-Pawad* (*U-Thombong*) and *Ka-Rajawad* (*Ka-Lawbei*).

There is a large number of clans among the Khasis and many of the clan names are those of animals and trees. *Shnish* is monkey, *thaw*, a crab, and *diengkoh*, a tree ; yet they do not constitute totemic clan organization. The clan names are not even the names of the ancestors. The clans are not ancestral but rather were territorial in nature when the clansmen (*khi-kur*) used to live in a place having a common land (*ri-kur*) and a clan cemetery (*mawbah*) where the bones of the dead clansmen were deposited.

Unlike the clans, the sub-clans (*ka-k'jaki*) are ancestral. As for example, in case of the *Siem* clan of the Cleve state, it is found that Ka-Khlem was the primal ancestress. Her daughter Ka-Pet had three daughters, namely, Ka-Sngi, Ka-Langam, and Ka-Rimb each of whom is regarded as the *Ka-k' jaki* (meaning womb) of their respective descendants who are *shi-k'jaki* (the members of the same womb). And their names are the names of the three sub-clans of the *siem* clan.

The names of the sub-clans of some of the clans so collected from the elderly Khasi women are given below.

CLAN	SUB-CLAN
1. Siem	— Sngi ; Langam ; Lamp
2. Khongsit	— Jyn ; Jhud ; Sar ; Jhuna
3. Khonbling	— Kur ; Mah ; Mynsiar ; Tynsa
4. Lyngkhi	— Sohra ; Mawlein ; Lamad
5. Rangsan	— Sangma ; Sangpal ; Ampang , Rachal
6. Khongwai	— Thaniu ; Thaad , Sarkar , Thi
7. Jaitthiar	— Sad ; Sawa , Nail ; Nala
8. Wanglina	— Ali ; Marjaw ; Jaad , Aad

Family (*ka-iing*) among the Khasis is the socio-economic and religious unit. Due to matrilocal residence, the structure of the Khasi families assumes a different form. The constituent members are the grandmother, her daughters and their children. But the permanent residents are the youngest daughter (*ka-Khadduh*), her husband and daughters. It takes an

[Should read: permanent. — Analyst]

extended form more often when the children of the deceased sisters of *Ka-Khaddiah* reside there. This extension is on the mother's side and is affiliated through the extension of mother-child relationship.

Additional members like widower brothers or widowed sisters make the Khasi family a composite one.

In a Khasi family father, mother and her brother are very important. Father who is regarded as *Kyndor* (stranger) or *U-khong-khe* (begetter), has also the position of *Kynmad* (master) of the house (set-up by him). He is the executive head and the mother is the *dajure* owner of the household.

Modern conditions and spread of Christianity have greatly affected the Khasi society and changed the Khasi ways of life but have failed to alter the traditional mode of inheritance even among the Christian Khasis. Another important fact which is apparent in the Khasi families, is the change of the status of the mother's brother (*U-kni*) in his sister's house. His influence has greatly been diminished due to clash with *Ka-Khaddiah* (Saiwan). He has almost lost his control over his sister's family. This has made the women exert their status to a danger point. Consequently, some amount of maladjustment in the relationship system, moral depravity and disintegration loom large in the family horizon.

Family is the core of Khasi social organization and the closeness of familial kin with the members of the sub-clan is due more to the fact that sub-clan owes its development to the family. A *Khi-K'juh* (member of sub-clan) is a secondary relative and can easily be approached for any help.

The functions of the above mentioned social groupings are as follows:

Clan (*Ka-Kur*)—It regulates marriage. It being a larger non-residential kin group contact between its members is infrequent. The amount of social participation needed on certain level to intensify the relationship among its members falls far short of. But nevertheless, there existed among the members

[Should read: regarded.—Analyst]

of a clan some ceremonial attachment developed out of the custom of deputing the house of the clansmen to clan ceremony and reserving the relationship between the clansmen on the ceremonial occasion of thakurmahak when the house were finely transformed from mundabing (ceremony of a sub-clan) to mundabi (ceremony of a clan).

Social bond among the clansmen is due to the performance of common religious ceremonies (jihar), worship of common deities and spirits of household (Kumbhalu), water (jhari) and hills (Kumdhen) and observance of mourning for three days for the death of clansmen with the exception of outdoor work specially with implements.

Economic bond among them is due further to the possession of common land (Pahar), which is divided into separate holdings held by families.

Sub-clan (Kur-Kijam)—Unlike the clan, sub-clan has nothing to do with the regulation of marriage. Its main functions are socio-religious. Mutual interest in the welfare of the members of sub-clan evinced in the observance of *sikaar*[1] in honour of the dead grandmother, profound sentiment grows out of the former practice of depositing the bones of the dead persons of the same sub-clan in *mundabing* and the responsibility of bearing the expenses for *thakurmahak* bind the members together.

The observance of mourning on the death of a person of the same sub-clan for three days and the consequent

[1] Offering of food to the spirits of the dead ancestors.

16:Boy 1-5 (no date) 1938 A&T Khasi A&T

IV. THE PLACE OF THE KHASI IN THE WORLD.

By

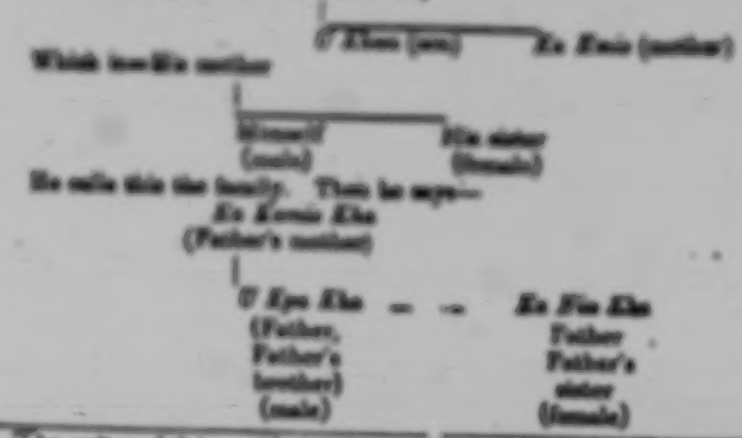
Daru Roy

(1) The Khasi country lies in the hills of the province of Assam in North East India. Khasi clans are exogamous and matrilineal, and the Khasis speak a Mon-Khmer language.

(2) In speaking of the place of the Khasi in the world I intend to explain the Khasi's own view of his relation to other peoples of the world.*

(3) The Khasi is very conscious of his importance. He says a Khasi claims to be the centre of the world. The Khasi has acquired such a feeling of self-importance from his great confidence in himself; and this confidence he has derived from the position in which his relationship-terminology represents him as standing with respect to himself and the world around him. Or, rather, his relationship terms and language are an expression of his attitude and notions.

(4) The Khasi says—*Ka Kmie* (mother)


U Khun (son)
Ka Kmie (mother)
Which is—Ka mother
Himself (male)
Ka sister (female)
He calls this the family. This he says—
Ka Kmie Kha (Father's mother)
U Epa Kha (Father, Father's brother) (male)
Ka Pia Kha Father Father's sister (female)

[114] The writer of this article is himself a Khasi (Christian)

exception. As I pointed out in the last chapter on the Garo, private ownership started with wet cultivation. In Kongton, there are no common (village) or clan land; every piece of land is owned by some household—more precisely it is owned by the woman, the head of a household, and managed by her brother or maternal uncle. The majority of households in Kongton possess land. Some of the richer households lend the land while some of the poorer households lease it. The rent for leases is Rs. 5/- per year for an area where one maund (to lbs.) of millet seeds can be sown. As there is no acreage system, the measurement is by quantity of seeds, and since shifting cultivation requires a change of field every year, the rent is fixed by the year. The parental gardens, also privately owned, are never leased. When labour is required, the owner engages villagers, paying them Rs. 3/- per day.

In Sohkynduh, there are some lands called "clan land." Throughout the history of the formation of Sohkynduh village, as reconstructed from my data, can be traced some evidence of the evolution of land ownership. The first inhabitants of Sohkynduh were said to be the people belonging to the Pnarian clan (See Lists 6 and 7). It seems that when the Pnarian came to this site, the land already belonged to the Dkhar clan of Rymmai village, five miles north of Sohkynduh. The present distribution of land ownership confirms this story. The jhum field belonging to Sohkynduh is divided into four sections according to the locality:

1. Lum Sohkynduh	3. Sohlong
2. Mawkhaia	4. Lumpaiong

One part of Lum Sohkynduh belongs to the Pnarian clan. The rest of Lum Sohkynduh, Sohlong and Mawkhaia belong to the Dkhar clan of Rymmai village, the management of which is in the hands of Phrosung who came from Rymmai and married a woman of Sohkynduh. Lumpaiong is owned by Sor (Kynthah clan, 32 of List 6) privately. The Pnarian and Dkhar lands are used by their descendants respectively. The people of other clans have to pay a rent of Rs. 8/- to use these clan lands. For the land which belongs to Sor, even the people of the same clan (Kynthah) have to pay rent since this land is privately owned. Thus the land of Sohkynduh belongs partly to particular clans and partly to a private owner.

Gurdon explains the existence of the clan land in the Khasi Hills as follows:

"The clan lands originally, when population was sparse, were owned by families, but as the members of the family increased and a clan was formed, the lands became the property of the clan instead of the family. Such clan lands are properly demarcated by stone boundary marks. The manager of the clan

178 land is the the maternal uncle of the youngest daughter of the main family,
427 or branch of the clan, whose house he may inherit, or last knew, is the place
for performing all the religious ceremonies of the clan, and is also called he
• 619 ïŋ kynj. All the members of the clan are, however, entitled to share in the
produce of any of the clan lands they may cultivate. No clan lands can be
alienated without the consent of a further of the whole clan" (Gordon, 1914,
p. 88).

178 Theoretically we can assume that the land was owned by the family
427 (precisely, ïŋ kynj, the matrilineal descent group at the lowest segmenta-
623 tion, the structure of which will be discussed later) who first claimed
619 the right to the land, and was managed by the maternal uncle of the
youngest daughter, the person entitled to the property. In course
of time, with the increase of the descent members and with fissions
of the descent group, this land was inherited through the youngest
daughter's line, but other members who had become segments of the
same descent group had a right to use the land, so long as they remain-
ed in the same area. Newcomers who belonged to another clan were
not granted the same right and had to pay rent. According to the
information I was able to collect, even people of the same clan could
not claim the right to use the land, unless they were the direct matri-
lineal descendants of the woman who first owned the land. In this
sense, the descent group solidarity at a lower level is much stronger
than that of the Clan.

Therefore, newly possessed or purchased land is always owned by
the individual family (ïŋ kynj descent group). This Khasi conception
of land ownership produces a picture of predominant private owner-
ship of land, combined with high geographical mobility of the popula-
tion (see p. 114). In such circumstances, it seems that even the
land called "clan land" has been alienated or sold frequently, and
has developed small holdings to suit the small segments of descent
groups. In particular, when the entitled owner moved away to another
area, the land was sold. For instance, in Sohkynñih, the maternal
uncle of Sor (mentioned above) purchased the land indicated above
about ten years ago from a family of Siem Lyngngoh who left for
another village. This land was originally purchased by the Siem
Lyngngoh from the Dkhar to whom the land belonged as part of the
clan land.

Under this system, clan ownership of land can develop only (1)
when the members of the descent group remain in the same community
for a considerable period and (2) when there is sufficient land to accom-
178 modate all members. I think these are the main reasons why land-
427 holding at present among the Khasi is found to be in small descent
428 groups—in one household as in Kongton in most cases, and this I call
private ownership. For the second reason, further explanation is

ceremony. The chances of acquiring a piece of land ourselves are small, except for very successful men, and usually the size of the plot is only just enough to maintain one household. When the land is passed on to the next generation, the youngest daughter will hold the title to it. This fact tends to exclude married older sisters from the right to use the land, since it is not sufficient for more than one household. Thus the ultimogeniture succession rule seems to have developed more sharply and to have encouraged limited inheritance in connection with the shortage of land.

This tendency creates imbalance in the economy of the households within a community. It is a usual picture in Khasi villages, for the bigger and well-built houses to be occupied by the youngest daughter's family, while the older sisters reside in poor huts. Youngest daughters are usually landowners, while their older sisters have often to become day-labourers after their marriage, unless their husbands are capable men, or their fathers wealthy enough to give them some share of their acquired property. On the whole, the variations at present between rich and poor are considerable in a Khasi community, in comparison with that of the Garo, where the economic condition of each household in a village is more or less similar. These differences are not only a matter of economic organization but arise from the nature of each social structure.

The economic and social patterns of Sohkynduh and Kongton are very similar, but their dialects are slightly different; my interpreter, who came from Cherraponjee, could work quite well at Sohkynduh, but at Kongton he found some difficulty, especially with the speech of the old men, and with their religious expressions. The head man of Kongton, who was quite accustomed to the Cherra dialect, acted as an interpreter for us. Such differences in dialect in the Khasi Hills are common phenomena, it is said that every valley has its own dialect. Differences are found not only in speaking, but also, to a certain extent, in culture and in social usages.

II. Village Endogamy

One of the outstanding features of Khasi social organization is the predominant tendency of endogamy on the level of the village, which contrasts with the structural orientation of the Garo village exogamy. This is closely connected with the distributions of clans and the nature of the descent groups.

The Khasi population consists of a number of *kur*, matrilineal clans, whose members consider themselves to be descended from a common ancestress. The members of the same *kur* have a common

614 [765] [769] maula (grave stone), in which the bones of all the dead members are buried. When the maula becomes full, or some members move away to a considerable distance, they provide another branch maula, creating a new *kur*.[1] Thus in course of time, every older *kur* occasionally branches off. Every branch *kur* has a different name, but can be grouped into a major *kur* thus forming a distinct exogamous group. Relationships among the minor *kur* of one major *kur* are usually known, or can be ascertained, so that marriages among these members are avoided. When the Khasi express this kind of group consciousness, they use the term *jut* (own people). For outsiders, it is difficult to know through the names of minor *kur* whether *kur* A and *kur* B are of the same group or not.

However, neither clan solidarity nor corporative activities are found among the Khasi, except in those clans which are considered of higher status, and maintain a functional position in the political or religious fields. Such are the Siem of the ruling clan and the Kingdoh of the priest clan, etc. Among commoners like the villagers of Mawphlang and Kongthong, the importance of a *kur* is confined to recognizing a common ancestress, with a common maula conception, which requires them to maintain a strict exogamous rule. But whether of major or minor *kur*, its members do not meet together or have a common leader. Actually major *kur* of which there are a considerable number all over the Khasi Hills, have no clear-cut geographical distribution. Each is scattered over a wide area, cutting across territory which includes several villages, and mixing with various other *kur*. Indeed, some of them are very widely distributed geographically and found in almost all regions of the Khasi Hills. A minor *kur* is also scattered over many different villages, though it shows more concentration than the major one. Consequently a village may be composed of small segments [621] of more than a dozen different *kur*. Even those small segments of each *kur* found in a single village have little or no sense of kin-group solidarity, unless the members have quite close kinship ties. In many cases, though some members have the same *kur* name, their relationship may be distant, so that they cannot always reconstruct their genealogical relationship. In such a case their behaviour and attitude towards the same *kur* members and towards other *kur* members show no difference.

613 Individuals are not grouped actually under the name of *kur* but in a smaller group of matrilineal descendants from one great-grand-

[764] 1. The Khasi cremate dead bodies; bones and ashes are usually kept in a spot near the youngest sister's house which is the centre of a functional descent group, for many years and finally placed in the maula of the *kur*. They say that these bones are to be collected and replaced into the maula every hundred years with a great ceremony. However, none of villagers are certain about the year when the last ceremony was held.

another, for which unit the Khasi word kpoh is used. Such a group of matrilineal kin is usually confined to one domestic family or to a group of households, linked by direct extension of a main household. However, even this descent unit is not a single productive and consumer unit, though it may act as a religious unit, having common ancestral property. I shall take up this thread again at a later stage of my analysis.

Because of the lack of the functional lineage organization as a corporate unit, the village community becomes the significant unit on a higher level of organization than that of kpoh. This fact is supported by the high tendency to community endogamy which links every household of a village into a unit with considerable cohesion and solidarity. In fact the members of a village community are linked to each other in various ways by affinal or cognatic ties.

Table 6. Khasi names and their [illegible] of Jaitiasuiah

Khasi name	Clan	Khasi name	Clan
1. Kuba	Pyllaong	Sam	Pyrtuh
2. Shnglam	Pyllaong	Kpa	Khasah
3. U Kuli	Pyrtuh		
4. Ju	Pyrtuh	Phongrong	Dkhar
5. Phi	Khongtah	Ior	Dkhar
6. Dwah	Dkhar	Wan	Sung
7. Suah	Khongkor	Shyor	Khongsit
8. Kramon	Dkhar	Kadon	Kongjah
9. Ioni	Dkhar	Shyor	Khongsit
10. Jud	Khonglam		
11. Jan	Khonsnir	Lang	Sung
12. Sir	Khongsnir	Kshad	Khongdor
13. U ai	Khongsnir		
14. Sujai	Khongdor	Sa	Shrieh
15. Tagor	Khongmusngat	Tik	Pyrtuh
16. Ing	Khongmusngat	Nonti	Sung
17. Phi	Khongsdir	Phom	Marngat
18. Khain	Pyrtuh	Nang	Shnar
19. Jap	Sung	Nyaiw	Dkhar
20. Khot	Shrieh	Lad	Khongdor
21. Pyn	Pyrtuh	Mok	Khongdor
22. Kam	Khonduh	Phah	Khongtah
23. Lasi	Pyrtuh	Jaid	Khongsiew
24. Shakmi	Khongngam	Jop	Dkhar
25. Jan	Khongsiew		
26. Jammod	Khonglam	Jamin	Diahtam
27. Kilo	Dkhar	Mota	Khonglam
28. Phamar	Diahtam	Rang	Dkhar
29. Jah	Diahtam	Rabeaing	Tyngseng
30. U Jan	Khonglam		
31. Khori	Shrieh	Rsing	Khonglam
32. Sor	Kyndah	Jamo (ob)	Diahtam

(Person named)	Son	Spouse	Son
551	—	—	—
619	01. Ku	Khongpi	Shen
	02. Thi	Khongjiow	Khuhu
• 614	03. Ume	Kuhimo	Jan
	04. Th	Khongpi	Khong
621	05. Ch	Khongpi	Nenzi
	06. Kuni	Shiroh	Ekumo
	07. Ku	Khongpi	Chih
	08. Phiro	Dikhu	Chakhai
	09. Hongpi	Khongkam	Jyan
	10. Ishikam	Thom	Kiny
	11. Pukong	Khongpi	Mihen
	12. Pyah	Shiroh	
	13. Liv	Phomai	
	14. Lihen	Kyrukuh	Syuhu
	15. Kuvi	Thom	Shimai
	16. Kyrukuh	Shiroh	Jum

Note: a) [illegible] s.s. and ys are households the heads of which are men who have no wife or wives (mother, sister) living with them.
b) Husbands of ms. ys and ys died, and ys divorced.
c) Husbands of ys and ys are the same man (polygynous).

List 7 Families by type of individuals named in List 6.

	(Person named) Widower	Wife	Spouse	Total
	—	—	—	—
1. Phomai	5	1	5	11
2. Kuhimo	3		3	6
3. Dikhu	5		6	11
4. Shiroh	5		1	6
5. Pukong	4		0	4
6. Kong	1		3	4
7. Khongpi	2		3	5
8. Khongnilo	5	0	1	5
9. Khongshei	5		3	8
10. Khongnuvepai	4		0	4
11. Khongkam	5	1	0	6
12. Khongjiow	0		1	1
13. Khongngain	1		1	2
14. Khongriah	1		3	4
15. Thom	3		0	3
16. Kyrukuh	2		1	3
17. Khongjah			1	1
18. Mazur			1	1
19. Tyguong			1	1
20. Majow			1	1
21. Khongji			1	1
Total	45	3	40	88

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

List 6. *Actual descent Links found among House-owners of Sohkynduh.*

*House-owners**	*Kur*
1. 18-21-23	Prarian
2. 4-45	Prarian
3. 28-29-35	Riahtam
4. 27-40	Dkhar
5. 20-42-44-38	Shrieh
6. 33-39-43	Khongsit
7. 36-37	Khongsit
8. 11-12	Khongsidir
9. 7-08	Khongshei
10. 16-15	Khongmawpat
11. 25-34	Khongjilew
12. 31-46	Kynshah

Note Figures correspond to that of List 6.

List 9. *House-owners and their Spouses of Kongtew.*

House-owner	*Kur*	*Spouse*	*Kur*
1. Shra	Pohnong	Ijaw	Khongsit
2. Klur	—	*(Mahalik)	Shabong
3. Phesi	—	*(Skit)	Majaw
4. Rai	—	D(Skit) (3)	—
5. Syen	—	Shynna	Khongsit
6. Khober	—	*(Irai)	—
7. Shngiam	—	D(Eerut)	Sohkhlet
8. Lphain	—	Juhoorai (11, 20)	Majaw
9. Ben	—	Khain	Riahtam
10. Kyrin	—	*(Ridon)	Sohkhlet
11. U Kynsic	—	D(Jat)	Khongsit
12. Sad	—	Khim	Khongwir
13. Tanghoi	Khongsit	*(Kheng)	Myrsiang
14. Kliaam	—	*(Mongbah)	Majaw
15. Lita	—	Borsing	Shabong
16. Wah	—	Mrit	Pohphang
17. Latem	—	*(King)	Shabong
18. Langdiang	—	Burma	Riahtam
19. Khamon	—	Swar	Pohnong
20. Mo	—	Juhoorai (8, 11)	Majaw
21. Klirt	—	Nohar	—
22. Thaknit	—	D*(Bit)	—
23. U Sohar	—	*(Jing)	Shabong
24. Lat	—	*(Khyllah)	Khongli
25. Dugar	—	*(Lariang)	Khongngain
26. Dato	Majaw	Iong	Khongshei
27. Bah	—	Thai	Sohkhlet
28. Hima	—	Shedar	Rangrah

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

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House-owner	Kur	Spouse	Kur
—	—	—	—
29. U Shai	—	Phri	Khongngain
30. Tamsa	—	*(Ramjai)	Pohnong
31. Klun	—	Joit	Khongwir
32. Krip	—	Mok	Buhphang
33. Main	—	Soh	Dkhar
34. Prin	Rangrah	Kber	Shabong
35. Ieh	—	Kdo	—
36. Kynian	—	Hara	Shabong
37. Tied	—		
38. U Thula	—	Phiri	Lyngdoh
39. Pata	Riahtam	D*(Biria)	Tding
40. Kit	—	Shkor	Pohnong
41. Rimai	—	D*(Piew)	—
42. Rita	—	*(Bhashon)	Kynshah
43. Ribih	—	Shamaliak	Lyngdoh
44. Git	—	Kynbei	Tding
45. Jemjani	Sukhhlet	Skin	Khongji
46. Wum	—	*(Mishon)	Shabong
47. Kror	—	Sho	Khongsit
48. Hori	Shabong	*(Brim)	Rangrah
49. Pho	—	Mlian	Khongji
50. Sho	—	Slam	Khongngain
51. Luguin	—	D*(Niew)	Lyngdoh
52. Rupa	—	Jubongrai (8, 20)	Majaw
53. Kaber	—	*(Rangsi)	Khongsit
54. Kolina	—	Poi	Majaw
55. Lak	Khongji	D*(Khyllah)	Khongsbei
56. U Phin	—	*(Syaid)	Myrieng
57. Thasi	—	Ten	Shabong
58. Dhesw	—	Dorma	Rangrah
59. Syaid	Myrieng	D(Phin, 56)	Khongji
60. Syur	—	Kdok	Khongrymmai
61. Sur	—	*(Base)	Shabong
62. Blok	—	D(Lar)	Majaw

Note: 1) * = dead. D = divorced.
2) House-owners of 11, 23, 29, 38 and 56 are men, and the rest are women.
3) Husband of 8, 20 and 52 are the same man (polygynist).

List 10. *Numbers by kur of Individuals named in List 9.*

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Kur	No. of house-owners		No. of spouses		Total
	Women	Men	Men	Women	
—	—	—	—	—	—
1. Pohnong	11	1	4		16
2. Khongsit	12	1	6		19
3. Majaw	7	1	7		15
4. Rangrah	4	1	3		8
5. Riahtam	6		2		8

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

Kur	*No. of house-owners*		*No. of spouses*		*Total*
	Women	*Men*	*Men*	*Women*	
6. Sohkhlet	3		3		6
7. Shabong	7		10		17
8. Khongji	3	1	2	1	7
9. Mynrieng	4		1	1	6
10. Khongwir			2		2
11. Buhphong			2		2
12. Khongngain			3		3
13. Khongshei			2		2
14. Dkhar			1		1
15. Lyngdoh			2		3
16. Tding			2		2
17. Kynshah			1		1
18. Khongrymmai			1		1
Total	37	3	34	3	119

List 11. *Actual Descent Links found among House-owners of Kongton.*

House-owners	*Kur*
1. 1-7	Pohsong
2. 2-3-12	Pohnong
3. 13-18	Khongsit
4. 14-15	Khongsit
5. 17-25	Khongsit
6. 19-20	Khongsit
7. 23-24	Khongsit
8. 26-29-33	Majaw
9. 27-28	Majaw
10. 31-32	Majaw
11. 36-38	Rangrah
12. 40-44	Riahtam
13. 42-43	Riahtam
14. 45-46-47	Sohkhlet
15. 48-49-54	Shabong
16. 50-60-61	Mynrieng

Note: Numbers correspond to that of List 9.

The data I collected in Sohkynduh and Kongton show that the number of households that can be included in a single descent group (actual kinship ties through female members) is strikingly small, as shown in List 8 (Sohkynduh) and List 11 (Kongton). The maximum number of households belonging to a recognizable descent group was four, and mostly two. Many households (19 households of Sohkynduh; 25 households of Kongton) which did not appear in List 8 and List 11,

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

formed independent descent groups by individual households, for which no traceable genealogical relation with any other descent groups could be established, though some of them belonged to the same *kur*. In Sohkynduh, the total 48 households were divided into 16 *kur* (according to the house-owner), and in Kongton, the total 62 households were divided into 9 *kur*, while the number of actual descent groups amount to 31 in Sohkynduh and 41 in Kongton.

This fact, I presumed, indicated a considerable mobility of the population of each village community. Hence, I tried my best to reconstruct the historical alignments of these descent groups, both from my genealogical data and with the help of the villagers' memory. The result showed that the mobility of the population over the last fifty years had been surprisingly great and complex. In Sohkynduh, the Praian clan seems to be the oldest inhabitants of this village with 16 *kur* segments. Next came a family of the Ksing. The third wave was a family of Khonglam, and the fourth, Siem Lyngngoh which I mentioned previously (p. 104). The next were families of the Kynshah, many members of which had left for Nonprian village after a few years. The sixth wave was the Srieh family. All the above movements took place before the great earthquake of 1897 which shook Assam. After 1897 the movements became more intense and complicated, and involved many families of various *kur*. The villagers could not remember the order in which they came: there has been continual coming and going even up to now. At present, the Prarian, the Ksing, the Khonglam, the Kynshah and the Dkhar are the older among the 16 *kur*. However, such migrations concern usually a single family only, not a group of *kur*, and that is the typical pattern of Khasi migration. Hence, families which have the same *kur* name do not always indicate the same movements. The incentive for such migration seems to be to get land better appropriated to one's economic condition. Particularly, as I have already mentioned elsewhere (p. 105), the shortage of land seems to encourage families of elder sisters who have no share of property, to move to other areas and look for land.

Thus, many households which make up the present village are minor segments of different *kur*, or of the same *kur*, but they can hardly trace their genealogical relations to one another. A migration to a new village was not undertaken at random; it was mostly as a result of information received from neighbouring villages, or from those where friends or relatives had already settled in. Several neighbouring villages usually dispose of more than one common market where they can exchange information and developed friendships over trading. The matrilineal kinship relation is no more important a factor than any of the others mentioned above. Among the Khasi,

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

the matrilineal descent group has a distinguished function only when there is common residence and common property. 178

In Kongton, among 9 different *kur* (List 10), Pohnong and Khonsit accounted for the majority of the population, while the rest, seven *kur*, were more or less of equal size. On the whole the population seemed more stable than that of Sohkynduh. However, as in Sohkynduh, actual descent groups amounted to 41, many of which have the same *kur* name but could not always establish genealogical relationship with one another; nor was there any functional cohesion. I failed to reconstruct the history of the formation of these descent groups: the villagers had no memory of their past except very fragmentary information which was quite insufficient to account for their present composition. They only insisted this was a very old village in comparison with Sohkynduh and other neighbouring villages. 613 614 621 [182]

While I was struggling with the villagers' scant accounts of their past and fragmented kinship relations among the present households, I was struck by the poorness of the villagers' genealogical memory in comparison with that of the Garo. Suppose A, B and C, who belonged to the same property-holding descent group three generations back: A and B being sisters and C being B's daughter. If B, including her descendants, moved away from the village two generations back, the present generation of A's and C's descendants would easily lose contact and knowledge of their genealogical relationship. This fact, on the other hand, illustrates some important aspects of the Khasi social structure: the kinship relation—matrilineal descent link—is not a significant factor beyond the scale of the household (property-holding descent group), and locality is more important than matrilineal descent for the formation of the Khasi community. Through the predominant practice of endogamy on the level of the village, the small segments (found on a level of a household or a group of a few households) of various different *kur* clustered in a village are linked by affinal relations each other, by which altogether form a well knit social organization of a village community. The cohesion and solidarity of the Khasi village community is strengthened by the local endogamy not by the localized lineage organization. 182 613 621

In fact, in contrast with the rather loose kinship relations which link different households, the affinal relations link almost every households in the village, as shown in Fig. 10. The lines, ———, indicate marriage relations between living members of households, and the lines, - - - - -, indicate affinal relations established through dead members of present households or through spouses' kinship relations at Sohkynduh, as in November 1955. In this way, except for one household (24), members of a single household are all linked together through affinal or cognatic ties. In some cases, the affinal relations between 602 621

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

601 [171] term *mama* for mother's brother designates as well mother's mother's brother. 3) Terms for mother's sister *(kmie)* and father's sister *(ñia)* are different; and, needless to say, father's brother is called *kpa*, not *kñi*? 4) Mother's mother *(meirad)* is differentiated from father's mother *(meikha)*, though the grandfathers on both sides are termed *parad*.

582 601 [171] As regards cross-cousin marriage, which, as we have seen, was an essential part of Garo social structure, the Khasi have no institutional arrangements. The cross-cousin distinction is indeed found in the Khasi kinship terminology. Among those who are called *para* (sibling), an additional term is applied to cross-cousins (both matrilateral and patrilateral). They are called *bakha*. However, this additional cross-cousin term should not be considered as indicating a preference [171] for cross-cousin marriage. This is structurally different from that of the Iroquois type discussed in terms of Garo kinship terminology, in which a prescrived cross-cousin marriage is involved. The term *para* (sibling) is more often used for them than *bakha*.[1] Actually, among the Khasi there is no preference for cross-cousin marriage; indeed there are even indications to the contrary, in that marriage with the mother's brother's daughter is not allowed during the life-time of the maternal uncle. In the same way, marriage with the father's sister's daughter is not allowed during the life-time of the father.

582 In fact, the Khasi have numerous prohibitions of marriages between near kin on both paternal as well as maternal sides. The first and second parallel cousins are avoided. Those related to father within three generations are avoided. Within such a framework of marriage prohibitions, the use of a special additional term for cross-cousins is an indication of marriageable relatives within the framework of prohibition. This should not be considered to indicate a marriageable member in an active sense or a preference for cross-cousin marriage.

However, such marriages do sometimes appear in my census; for example, a man may have married a woman who is the sister of his brother's wife, or of his sister's husband. Thus sometimes between two descent groups there are more than two exchanges of men. But such relations are temporary and would terminate after one or two 582 generations. There is no structural continuity. My censuses of four Khasi villages do show some tendency to marriages between two • 614 specific *kur*, but I consider this to be largely accidental. When the choice of an individual is random, but one or two *kur* are larger than the others, it will naturally follow that there will be a high frequency

[171] 1. Such use of the dual terminology is also found among the Zuni and the Trukese, (see the discussion, in pp. 154-155).

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

of marriages between these two *kur*. Such marriage arrangements cannot be regarded as constituting a cross-cousin institution. From my data of four villages it was not possible to produce any institutionalized pattern.

In general, the selection of a marital partner depends mainly on personal choice, though the authority of the *iing* (descent group) and parents should be consulted. The man proposes to the girl. The network of marriage relations among the Khasi seems in no way to follow any set principle. Every marriage is likely to be fortuitous: it is ruled simply by temporary personal liking, except for the strict rule of exogamy and the avoidance of near kin.

Exogamy is strictly kept. In the olden days breaking this rule was equivalent to being sentenced to death. Offenders had their heads shaved in a particular way and had to leave the Khasi community completely. Even now such a marriage is considered as the worst kind of sin; a Khasi Christian intellectual said to me that it was worse than homicide. I came across one couple who had broken this rule. Though they had different *kur* names, both *kur* were segments of one common *kur*. It happened in Jatinga, one of the most modern Khasi communities whose inhabitants were all Christians. The couple were not allowed to have their house inside the village. Their house was in the jungle about one mile away from the village.

Successive sororate marriage—marriage to a younger sister of the late wife—is practised, since it justifies the widower in remaining in the same household as his children after his wife's death. Otherwise, the Khasi rule demands that he should leave the house and his children in order to remarry another woman. We shall deal with this aspect again in terms of marriage.

II. Principle of Descent and Succession

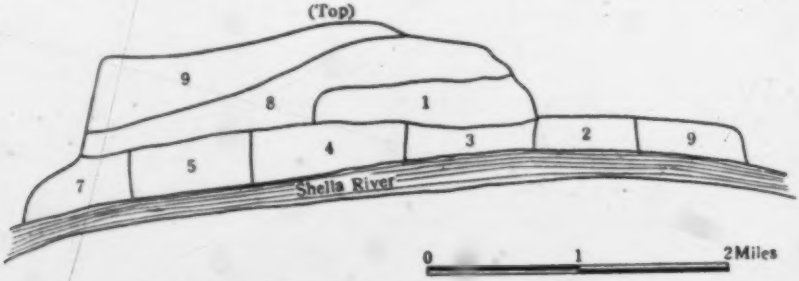
Previously I have mentioned the *kpoh*, the matrilineal kin group with a common great grandmother. This is not, however, an institutional corporate descent group. The most important functional descent unit is called *iing*. The *iing* is the lowest order of clan segmentation, smaller than the *kpoh*—a *kpoh* may include two or more *iing*. The generation depth of an *iing* is usually two to four, in some cases an *iing* is formed only by mother and child. The Khasi consider this unit to be the most important social index for the classification of individuals. Marriages are arranged by individual *iing*, not by wider groups of kinsmen. The *iing* is the structurally significant norm. The term *iing* is also used for a house building itself, as is the *nok* of the Garo. However, the membership of the *iing*, as I shall

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

[Shella]

(7) Mawrongkhong, (8) Rynsong-kanor, and (9) Sholap, as shown in Map 9. In Shella village the number of households in each section ranges between 10 and 80. Such a section is called *kher*, and was supposed to be the site of households of segments of every *kur* (clan). It seems that Shella village was once composed of nine different *kur* which could intermarry with each other. However, nowadays, each section, as appeared in my census, has nothing to do with the *kur* as such; it is simply a geographical section. According to the information which I gathered, there had been a tendency for the same *kur* people to gather within the section, before the great earthquake in 1897 brought considerable

[102]



MAP 9. — *Distribution of Sections in Shella Village.*

damages and death to this area: many of them left the village at the time and many houses changed their sites in the village when they were reconstructed. For instance, the composition of Jasir section in January 1956 was as follows:

Name of kur	*Number of houses*	*Name of kur*	*Number of houses*
1. Yuchyne	7	9. Lyngdoh	1
2. Iunei	4	10. Riang	1
3. Lorit	4	11. Nongtathiang	1
4. Synren	3	12. Loki	1
5. Ksaieng	3	13. Kanto	1
6. Nongbri	3	14. Kanti	1
7. Siem	2	15. Khelwa	1
8. Iunoi	2	16. ?	5
		Total	40

The people said that in Jasir, the Yuchyne was the most influential *kur*, and must have been the original *kur* in this section. However, no clan solidarity could be observed. These seven households were socially and economically quite independent of each other, as are all other households. As a whole, the importance of *kur* diminished a great deal in this village. Five households in Jasir were reluctant to mention their *kur*; some of them did not care about their *kur*; others were not themselves certain to which *kur* they belonged. The *kur* is losing its function to a great extent. This can be ascribed to the high degree of sophistication and mobility. However, except for one Siem woman who came from the uplands and married a man of this village, all 15 *kur* mentioned above are local clans frequently found within the Shella Confederacy. In this area also community endogamy was predominant. Perhaps the Shella

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

[Jatinga]

This village was founded in 1905 by Khasi immigrants from the Jaintia Hills. At the entrance of the village, a bust of the founder, Lakhanbang Suchiang, stands facing towards the east; it was erected on the occasion of the celebration of their Golden jubilee, in November 1955. Houses are scattered along the ridge of the moutain to the east and to the west; in the centre is the church. All the inhabitants are Christians. Before the Partition this was one of the most modern and prosperous villages in Assam.

Jatinga provides a very interesting instance of the Khasi 'colonial' village. It is surrounded by villages of the Kuki, of the Zemi-Naga, and of the Cacharee, who constitute the main population of the North Cachar Hills, and who are tribes entirely different from the Khasi, in economy, social organization, language and culture. Therefore, Jatinga is like an island of Khasi community. I took this village as one of my fields, because I was particularly interested to discover how far the Khasi matrilineal organization is kept up in a community thus situated, surrounded by patrilineal tribes, and considerably modernized by Christianization and economic prosperity; and I was also interested in the process of formation of a new village, in comparison with Rinsibara and Joshipara in the Garo Hills.

Formation of the Present Population of Jatinga.

The first immigrants to Jatinga.

The main population of Jatinga, including the founder, originated in Bataw village in the Jaintia Hills, twelve miles away from Jaintiapur, the capital of the then Jaintia Rajas. This village is situated on the border of the Jaintia Hills and the East Bengal plain, the location being very similar to that of Shella, as are their culture and economy. In the later part of the nineteenth century, some members of Bataw village moved to Borkhala, ten miles from Silchar, one of the biggest villages of the then Cacharee king.

These immigrants who came to Borkhala stayed there about fifteen years before they came to Jatinga. Kloribon, the first daughter of the founder's sister was born there. In November 1905, some Christian Khasi left Borkhala for Jatinga, acting on information gathered from a Welsh Mission at Haflong, that the land of present Jatinga was fertile and fit for their cultivation. They were the first immigrants to Jatinga. The Government record names the following three persons as the first immigrants to Jatinga: Suchiang Lakhanbang, Tariang, and Suchen Munik. In fact, according to the data which I collected at Jatinga, Suchiang Lakhanbang was accompanied by the following persons (the names in brackets indicate the clans):

his wife, Misibon (Phanwar),[1]
his brother, Pryntah, and Pryntah's wife, Sintu (Rupsi),
his sister, Laptho, and Laptho's husband, Munik (Suchen) with their daughter, Kloribon, and Munik's younger brother, Sain.
his friend, Tariang.

Soon after their settlement, Sain, the brother of Munik, brought his wife Tahin (Suiam) from Jaintia. Misibon brought her younger sister, Diasibon. Tariang who came with Lakhanbang afterwards called his wife, Palong. But having spent some time there, they left eventually for another place, so that

1. Misibon was a native of the Cherrapunjee area of the Khasi Hills (not of Jaintia like the others). She was a school teacher at Cherrapunjee, and later became a teacher at a school near Jaintiapur, where she married Lakhanbang.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

there are none of their descendants in Jatinga. Summing up, the first party who settled at Jatinga was composed of people of the following five clans:

1. Suchiang — Lakhanlang, his sister, Laptho, and her daughter, Kloribon, his brotler, Pryntah.
2. Suchen — Munik and his younger brother, Sain.
3. Phanwar — Misibon and her younger sister, Diasibon.
4. Rupsi — Sintu, the wife of Pryntah.
5. Suiam — Tahin, the wife of Sain.

Among them, Suchen had no female member. Phanwar had no successor: Misibon had no issue and Diasibon did not marry. Therefore, Suchiang, Rupsi and Suiam are the oldest clans in present Jatinga. Suchiang and Rupsi especially are the dominant and richest groups among the present population.

This was the time when the railway from Gauhati to Silchar was being constructed. Some Khasi labourers were working at Haflong on the construction of the railway. After the foundation of Jatinga, these Khasi workers established marriage relations with the Khasi of Jatinga, and finally, upon completion of the railway, many of them became the inhabitants of Jatinga. The present members of the Dome and Siangshai clans are the descendants of these people, and they form a considerable number of the present inhabitants of Jatinga. Besides then, there were a few other Khasi at Haflong who were engaged in trading business. In the course of time, they also had marital relations with Jatinga people and came to Jatinga.

After five years had elapsed they found that in spite of their hard work the land was not favourable to them. Many of them left Jatinga. This was the hardest period of Jatinga history.

The second migration (1919-1925).

The railway which once had been blocked was reopened in 1919. The people who had left Jatinga came back to settle there. This time the circumstances seemed to them quite favourable. The pan trees which they had planted earlier were growing and they could gather considerable produce. The village grew bigger around 1920 as a result of new immigrants from Jaintia; most of them were people from Bataw, the village of the founder. In this period, many immigrants came from Jaintia not only to Jatinga but also to Sylhet, Borkhala and other places outside the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. It seems that by this time the over-populated Jaintia realised that these areas were favourable for their new home. However, the successive waves of Jaintia immigrants to Jatinga ceased by 1925, its population having reached saturation point.

Orange production brought economic prosperity to the people of Jatinga. Wealthy villagers employed temporary labourers from the Jaintia Hills every year. Some of these labourers came with their families and others came individually. During their stay at Jatinga, some of them married and settled there. Hence, there are also descendants of such labourers among the present inhabitants of Jatinga.

Some Aspects of Descent Groups.

Throughout the history of Jatinga, immigrations have always been undertaken by a family (elementary family, siblings) or by an individual, but never by a group of clan members. Therefore, the present population is grouped in small descent groups according to each migration. Though some of them happened to have the same clan name, their history of migration and their

clothing, operate the large Khasi business establishments in Shillong, and provide all civic and religious leadership. Women care for children and for the home, do the marketing, and sell dried fish, betel nut, lime, fruits, and rice breads at markets. Other tasks can be performed by either sex. **Land tenure.** Land was formerly divided into sib land and public domain. Sib land was corporately held in perpetuity, and was inalienable except by the unanimous consent of all members of the sib. The public domain was subject to usufructuary right by anyone who kept the land regularly under habitation or cultivation, with a lapse of no more than three years. Most villages grew up on public domain, and then reckoned all land inhabited or under cultivation by a village member as village land. Forests were public, except for sacred groves possessed by villages or lineage groups, and everyone was free to gather branches for fuel. Wastelands and streams were also public. By now, most public domain and village land, together with its forest cover, has been pre-empted as private property and is being rented and sold as such. Sib lands remain intact, unless the sibs agree to rent, lease, or sell. [Cf. Cantlie 1934.]

KIN GROUPS. **Descent.** Descent is matrilineal, and the Khasi is a member exclusively of his own matrilineage from birth to death. Adoption, which is very rare, is only within the matrilineage. **Kin groups.** The maximal matrilineage is the sib, this is a named, widely dispersed, strictly exogamous, lineage group, which claims but cannot trace its origin from a single ancestress. Sibs used to meet as corporate groups from time to time. Some sibs are linked with others in large amorphous groups that are unnamed and are defined solely by exogamy. Such a group is composed of two or more sibs, the ancestresses of which are claimed to have been either real sisters or dear friends who out of affection declared that thenceforth their descendants would be as consanguineals. The origin and function of sib-linkage is now unknown, and today the members of a sib will often disagree on whether or not their sib is linked with another. • The minimal matrilineage is the local descent group, or *iing*. This is the largest kin group that normally rallies at life crises. It is said that the *iing* formerly spanned six generations; today, it encompasses only four. If an *iing* grows to more than four generations in a single village, it segments. New houses are located at some distance from the old and the *iing* soon forgets exactly how to trace genealogical connection, except for which segment descended from a youngest sister. The term *iing* may also be applied to an extended family, an elementary family, and a house. The elementary family is the basic domestic unit in Khasi society. In any village there are likely to be one or two households which stand as sole local representatives of the lineage of the female household head. Such a household is known as an

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

593 wedlock goes to the wife and becomes her property; but all other
428 property is inalienable, and reverts to his family, as also does his corpse after death.

771 'RELIGION.—The religion of the Khásiás is demon-worship, or a jumble of enchantments muttered by priests who are sorcerers. They invoke evil spirits as the deputies of God and the instruments
775 of His pleasure or displeasure. The Khásiás believe in metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls. After death, human beings are transformed into monkeys, crabs, tortoises, frogs, etc. Though a future state is not denied, it is treated with absolute indifference, as beyond the sphere of responsibility; all rites, ceremonies, and observances bear reference to the welfare of mankind in this world. The spirits of their departed relatives and ancestors are invoked only in so far as they are considered to influence and have power
764 over the present life. The Khásiás burn their dead, and collect the ashes into urns, which are kept under a slab raised on four others enclosing a space. These monuments are of various kinds and sizes —one for individuals, another for a family, and another for a whole
• 614 clan. There is no caste system, but each clan is called after some object of nature, as the Oak clan, the Crab clan, etc., and these names entail certain restrictions beyond which intermarriage is
771 forbidden. The Khási religion may be briefly described as the practice of forms to cure diseases, and to avert misfortunes of all kinds, by means of ascertaining the name of the demon who is the author of the evil, and the kind of sacrifice necessary to appease it.

797 'CHRISTIANITY. — The Welsh Mission has been labouring amongst the Khásiás and Syntengs for thirty-two years. The Christians number about 1000 [according to the Census of 1872, the total number of native converts in the District is only 85]. There are four central stations—Cherrá, Shellá, Shillong, and Jowái —and twenty-three churches. Translations of the whole of the New Testament, and a portion of the Old, are now (1876) going to press, besides other religious books.

197 'LANGUAGE.—The definitions generally given of monosyllabic
193 languages are far from adequate to enable us to assign to the Khási tongue its position amongst the Indo-Chinese family of speech. Still, in the absence of a better terminology, it may be described as monosyllabic in the agglutinative stage. The monosyllabic element greatly predominates. By far the larger number of the compounds are mere agglutinations (in a modified

21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

namely that male members of a matrilineal clan enjoy, among Khasi as among other matrilineal groups in India, a position which, far from unenviable, is a very high one in itself and doubly fortified by the respect which to the same male family member is being shown (*a*) in his capacity as the father of his children in his wife's clan (comp. term 8 of the list), and (*b*) in that of the maternal uncle (comp. terms 14, 14/*a*, 14/*b* and 26 and 28).

The terms 33/*b*, *c*, *g*, *h*, have classificatory character.

The term 33/*e* — *u kong* for the husband's older sister's husband is one of the exceptions of the rule that *kong* generally signifies an honoured older female relative but, as in this case, also her husband (comp. term 26).

Term 36/*a u pa* (father) in its usage among Pnár (Jaintia), also for stepfather is significant. A Pnár child has no legal clan-relationsihp with his/her biological father, who belongs to another (matrilineal) clan than the child and mother. Yet the honorific term *pa* is, among Pnár, also applied to a stepfather, although neither legal, nor biological but merely ideological relationship via the mother, exists between stepfather and -child. This use of the word *pa* thus seems to emphasize both, firstly the integration of the matrilineal family structure, by making an unrelated stepfather to be looked upon as father, owing to his relationship with Ego's mother and, secondly the important sociological and psychological position of the father in this matrilineal family structure which appears to go back to an old tradition among the Pnár.

Term 41 — *para 'rieu lum* [33] (Assamese hill tribals) are characteristically termed *para* (Brethren), although they are different in many respects, from the Khasi, yet considered as definitely nearer related than all other neighbours, grouped under the

Term 43 — *dkhar* (plainspeople) [34], — a term which varies in emotional content from contempt pure and simple to an attitude, somewhat parallel to what ordinary English usage would generally associate with the expression "continental". Marriages of Khasi girls and boys with *dkhar* do occur, though infinitely rarer than marriages of (especially educated) Khasi girls with (educated) *para 'rieu lum*, Nepalese, Gurkha or Chinese boys. One of the reasons which is usually being given for this preference for non-Indians is by no means colour-prejudice, but the taboo on either beef or pork which most *dkhar ïong* [35] (Indians, Hindus or Muslims, respectively) observe; a taboo which they generally extend to their Khasi wives, thus preventing them from enjoying two favourite Khasi national dishes. Another more psychological reason is the overbearing treatment of wives, which is generally ascribed to *dkhar ïong*, more even than to *dkhar li* [36]. It is in this connection

[33] Literally: Brethren Humans Hill.

[34] With Dkhar are here meant the plainspeople as such; — not the Khasi Dkhar (or Khar) clans which are mostly, if not always, descended from ancestresses who had been captured in the plains and brought to the Khasi Hills; comp. CHATTOPADHYAY (1941), pp. 30/31 and EHRENFELS (1950/*A*), pp. 33/34.

[35] Literally: Plainspeople black.

[36] Literally: Plainspeople white.